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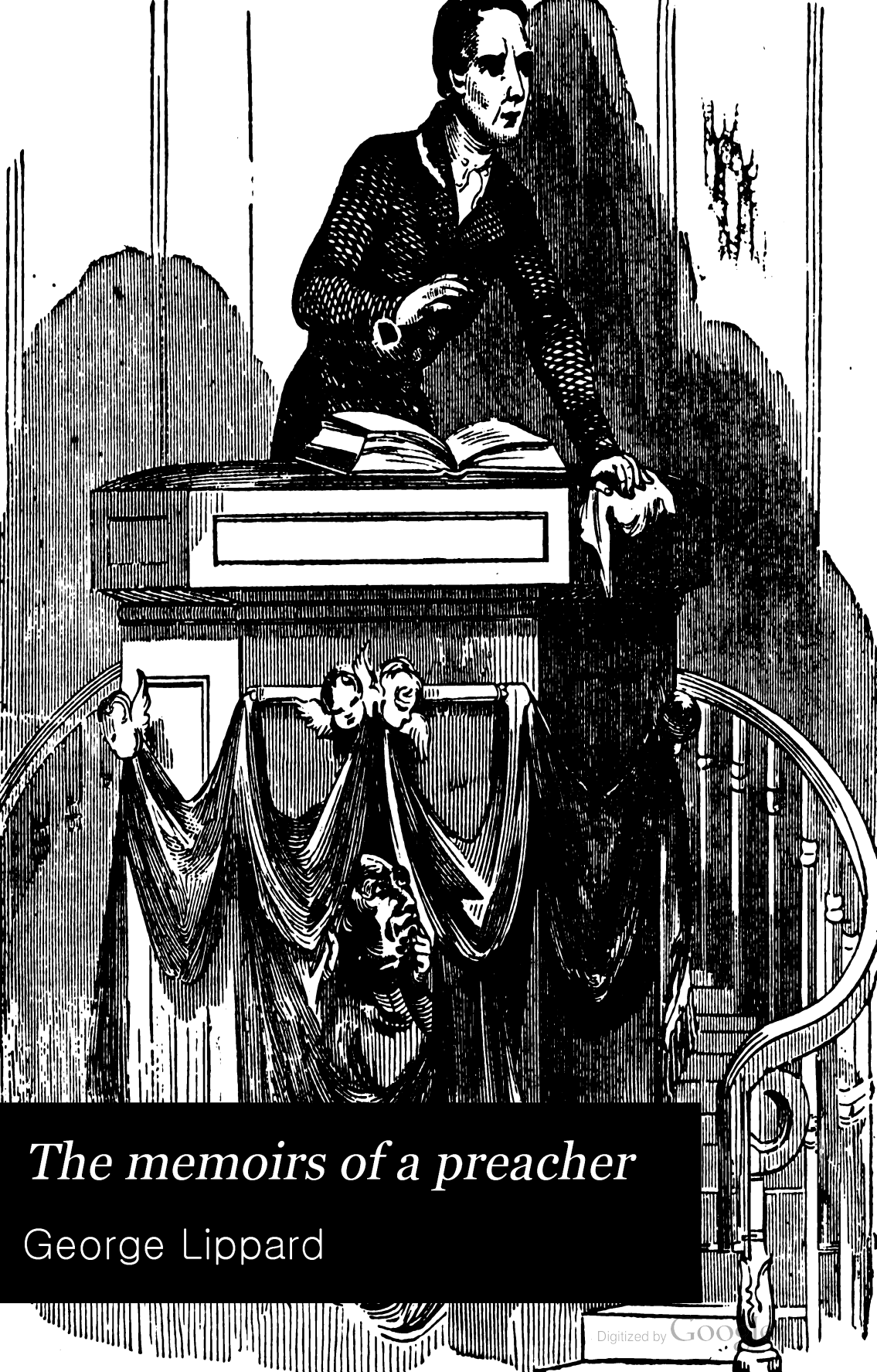
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The memoirs of a preacher

George Lippard

THE

MEMOIRS OF A PREACHER;

OR,

THE MYSTERIES OF THE PULPIT.

BY

GEORGE LIPPARD.

AUTHOR OF "THE MYSTERIES OF FLORENCE," "THE EMPIRE CITY; OR, NEW YORK BY NIGHT AND DAY,"
"WASHINGTON AND HIS MEN," "THE LEGENDS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION; OR, WASHINGTON
AND HIS GENERALS," "THE QUAKER CITY; OR, THE MONKS OF MONK HALL," "BLANCHE OF
BRANDYWINE," "PAUL ARDENHEIM, THE MONK OF WISSAHICKON," "THE NAZARENE,"
"LEGENDS OF MEXICO," "THE ENTRANCED," "BANK DIRECTOR'S SON," ETC

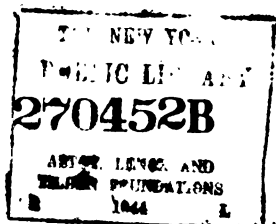
"THE LIFE OF A POPULAR PREACHER, TOLD IN THE PLAINEST SHAPE, WOULD MAKE THE MOST INTERESTING BOOK OF A CENTURY."—*Confessions of a Minister*.

Philadelphia:

T. B. PETERSON & BROTHERS,

306 CHESTNUT STREET.

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THE MEMOIRS OF A PREACHER.

CHAPTER FIRST.

THE MAN WITHOUT A NAME.

On a clear Sabbath Night, in the depth of winter, when the roofs and streets are white with snow, and the sky without a cloud, is mellowed by the rising moon—On a clear Sabbath Night, when the chimes of Christ Church come pealing through the silent air, and a brooding quiet reigns over the Great City—

Then the curtain rises, and this Drama which is too improbable for fiction displays its varied and crowded scenes.

One side of Chesnut street is wrapt in shadow; the other rests in the light of the rising moon. The marble pile, which stands near Independence Hall, rises grandly into the serene sky, like a vast palace of ice and snow. From the hundred windows of yonder edifice, as many glimpses of fireside light, steal out upon the snow, and mingle with the rays of the moon. Suddenly the scene is thronged by crowds of well-dressed men and women, who are hurrying to the various Churches of the Great City, their dark attire strongly contrasted with the white mantle which over-spreads the street. The Lawyer has forgot his quibbles for awhile, the Merchant his Day-book, the sleek Quaker his deeds and ground-rents, the lady of fashion, her last shawl or lover, and all are hurrying to the worship of the—Lord! What Lord? The Being who spread this sky, and set it with countless worlds, who said long ago, that All men were alike his children?

Or, the Lord of the Great City, worshipped alike in Bank and Parlour and Church—
THE DOLLAR.

Let us, while these well-dressed crowds are thronging to their Sabbath evening worship—while the great Bank of the United States, that sepulchre of dead fortunes, glistens in the rising moon—while the serene air is filled with the music of bells, pealing their sad melody over the silent city—let us, I say, look into the lighted window of yonder edifice, and behold the opening scene of the Drama.

It is a brilliantly lighted chamber in a Hotel—one of those huge buildings, which glare along Chesnut street, with groups of solemn dandies before their doors, and a whole world of passions, hates and fears shut up within their walls.

A chamber lighted with gas, the walls adorned with pictures—Henry Clay and Andrew Jackson, framed side by side with the last Opera singer—and in the centre, a supper table, strewn with the fragments of a luxurious feast, and with some dozen bottles of "Heidsick," scattered at irregular interval over the board.

Around the table, are seated some half dozen persons, who lounge in their chairs, and elevate their boots upon the table, and talk incessantly through a cloud of cigar smoke.

The gentleman at the head of the table, whose bulky form is illuminated rather than dressed, by a red waistcoat, attracts one's gaze by his light blue cravat, his green coat, cut in jockey style, his plaid pantaloons and neatly curled hair. He looks like a gay horse jockey, but he is simply a Dry Goods Merchant, who has a store somewhere up town, but who is always to be seen, either at the billiard room or the opera. Sometimes he may be met, in the shadows at the corner of Third and Chesnut streets, whispering his pleasantries into

the ear of some poor girl, who is hurrying from her work to her home. He was knocked down the other day, for one of these harmless pleasantries, by the brother of a Milliner — this indeed is true — but Dicky Bung is a Philosopher. A hundred knockings down would not discompose him in the least.

Next to Dicky Bung, the Hero of the dark corners, and Adonis of the Opera, sits a young gentleman, with a sickly face, weak eyes, and reddish brown mustache. He is dressed like a Market street clerk — as though a rainbow had been spilled over his head — and all over his breast and on every finger of his delicate hand, a violent eruption of jewellery, is visible. This is Charley — Charley Blink, whose father is supposed to be very rich indeed, and who has an aunt in the West, worth a mint of money.

Then, with boots on the table, and one eye fixed on the ceiling, we behold a fat little man, with small eyes, shrill voice, and hair of no colour at all. This is Ben Timson the politician, who never makes a speech at a political meeting, but by way of compensation for the lack of oratorical powers, he receives every day, a mysterious letter from some distinguished personage. The other day Henry Clay wrote to him; the day before he received a letter from a second cousin of Louis Napoleon; and it was only last week, that he was favored with an epistle from the Secretary of War. He is deep. Politics is no labyrinth with him. He can tell you, to a hair, the difference between any two tariffs, or the name of every member, who voted against the celebrated "Mistletoe Bough" bill.

And side by side with Ben Timson the politician, lounges a Medical student with long hair, badly tied neckerchief, and a most enormous cigar. He is smoking himself into a diploma. Stanly Augustus Mount-Fizzleton from the State of Maryland, Eastern Shore.

Beside Stanly, you may observe George Washington Widdleton, who holds his cigar in the centre of his mouth, and puffs away, until his eyes start from their sockets — a Broker from Third street, who does good paper for twenty-five dollars in the hundred, and has an understanding with a bank or two. His hair is very short and stiff; his mouth enormous; his forehead not more than an inch an

a half in width. You will therefore perceive, that his long nose, hooked like the beak of a parrot, cannot fail to impart a remarkable finish to his visage. He looks like a vulture, tamed by Welsh for his Circus, and dressed by some fashionable tailor, as a novel sort of "show card."

The last person of this company, whose name we do not know, sits silent yet observant at the lower end of the table. He, alone, rests his feet upon the floor. He is a young man of some seven and twenty years, with a form rather above the medium height, a prominent chest and broad shoulders. His forehead high and pale, and remarkable for its width at the summit, is shaded by tangled masses of brown hair. His lips are thin — compressed — and either sad or scornful in their perpetual composure. Add to this picture, a nose slightly aquiline, a chin almost too sharp and prominent, and eyes deep set under bushy eyebrows, and you will here have some idea of the last man, in our company.

His name is unknown to us.

While the others smoke and talk and laugh, he sits perfectly still, listening very patiently, but only unclosing his lips to utter monosyllables.

Let us listen to the conversation, in this gayly-lighted chamber of the great Hotel.

"Tight!" exclaims Widdleton the Broker, knocking the ashes from his cigar. "Tight is no word for it! I tell you, gentlemen, money is perfectly —" he hesitated for a word — "perfectly enormous. Why do you know, that only yesterday, father wanted me to do his paper, at twenty per cent., and says I, 'can't do it old man without the collateral.' Business is business, says I, and when a man gets on Third street, he must not allow himself to think that he ever had a father. But let's sink the shop. Pass the bottle, Charley, and Bung my boy, tell us what's new in the fashionable world."

Bung arranged his blue cravat, and smoothed his hair, and unclosed his lips, when Ben Timson broke in with the exclamation —

"It will not be permanent. Gentlemen, I tell you, it will not be permanent. (Another cigar Widdy.) Upon my word, and I don't often

give my word, unless I'm certain of a thing, upon my word, it will not be permanent."

And Timson hit the table with his clenched fist, lighted a cigar, and sank back dreamily in his chair.

"What do you mean? What in the deuce are you driving at?" cried Charley Blink with a half frightened look.

"What is it that will not be permanent?" echoed Bung.

"The Tariff," said Timson, solemnly as he closed his eyes and folded his hands.

The gravity of this remark, was not appreciated by the company. The Medical student swore between his teeth. Bung shook with an explosion of laughter, and the Broker soothed himself with another glass of Heidsick, exclaiming:

"Sink the shop, Ben, sink the shop. Never mention 'Tariff!' over a bottle of wine. Bah! It smells of the Custom House. Come, —let's talk about the women. Bung, you begin."

You will remember that the last person, who sat at the lower end of the table, did not mingle in this conversation, but sat perfectly quiet, his eyes glittering under their bushy brows, as he calmly smoked his cigar.

"A delicious bit o' gossip stirrin' about town to-day," began the Dry Goods Merchant, with a complacent smile. "They do say that — by the bye, Widdy," he whispered to the Broker, "What is the name of your friend at the end of the table? He may know the parties, who are concerned in this bit o' news, — eh?"

"Don't know him, Bung." Introduced to me to-night, by a friend, who told me to show him over town. Forgotten his name. A western merchant I 'spose. Got the 'tin.' Pro-ceed Bung."

At every stop, Widdleton took a sip of champagne, and made a false pretence of reaching for a cigar, while Bung was listening to his muttered words.

Meanwhile the LAST PERSON, whose name is unknown to us, or to the company, preserved his taciturn demeanor, as he attentively surveyed the faces of the others, from his post at the end of the table.

"I saw my boy," shouted Widdleton, "Why

don't you shake off the horrors, and help us to demolish this dozen of Heidsick. 'Tis not the fair thing my fellow, to set there, as gloomy as a mezzotint engraving in a Magazine, while we are doing our best to get our spirits up for a cruise 'round town. Drink my boy, and afterwhile, I'll show you, some of the secrets of the Quaker City. Never seen the inside o' this village, did you?"

The gentleman at the end of the table, who was thus abruptly addressed, started in his chair, as though he had been interrupted in the midst of a reverie, and then, exclaimed, with a polite inclination of his head:

"You must excuse my dullness. I am rather absent this evening;" he raised his glass, "Here's to our excursion through the Quaker City — and at midnight, too — we shall see some rare sights — shall we not?"

And with an evident effort at hilarity, he tossed off his glass, and tried very hard to look as "much in liquor" as the rest of the company.

"Mr. Bung, you were about to tell us a story," he continued, leaning forward and lighting a cigar. "Let us have something good. You favorites of 'the sex' have always a fund of anecdote hid away somewhere at the bottom of the champagne glass. Go on, my good fellow."

Bung smiled all over his face, and proceeded:

"You know old Snawlip the wine merchant, — don't ye? Last year he was married — we danced at the wedding, Widdy. A fine girl that — you remember her, Sophia Barnley, who was just old enough to be her husband's grand daughter. Sophy was poor — Snawlip was rich. Snawlip was as ugly as the d——l — Sophy was a beauty and a belle. Sophy had no capital but her beauty — Snawlip was worth a couple of hundred thousand. They were married, and we danced at the wedding. And — by the bye — where was I in my story?"

"A little drunk Bung; that's all. Go on," sententiously remarked the Broker.

"Fire ahead!" said the Medical student with enthusiasm.

"Sophy and Snawlip — go on!" chorussed Timson.

Meanwhile the unknown person, had relapsed into his former abstracted air. He sat biting the end of his cigar, with his eyes fixed on the floor.

"Well, Snawlip knew that he bought his young wife with his money, and he's always been as jealous of her, as Forrest is of Shyllock, or—or—as Othello is of Hamlet. Curse the thing I've got it all wrong. Widdy my boy, who is it, that's jealous of somebody else, in Shakspeare's plays?"

Again the Dry Goods Merchant was brought to a pause. He looked around with a distracted air, his eyes full of champagne and sleep.

"It's Othello, I believe," said the Broker. "You're dull to-night Bung."

"And he—that is Snawlip, not Othello—has always been on the watch, in regard to his handsome and fashionable wife. She is a love of a woman! But lately—do you hear me—lately a change has come over the gay lady. She used to worry the old man by giving splendid parties—now she drives him mad by going to—Church! Ha, ha, ha! Just think of it!"

He laughed with hysterical violence, and all his friends shared in his merriment—all save the absent gentleman at the end of the table.

"But I'm a little too fast in my story," resumed Bung, holding his glass between his eyes and the gas light; "You know that about a month ago, he came to town."

As he pronounced the emphasized word he applied his finger to his nose, and in trying to look very knowing, expanded his eyebrows and distended his nostrils, until he gave you the idea of a sick man who is horror-stricken by the approach of a galvanic battery.

"He?" exclaimed the others in chorus, by way of interrogation.

"The man of men, who has given all the women in town love powders, and who frightens our most respectable merchants into fits, with his sermons. The Popular Preacher, my boys, here's to him anyhow, though he does preach brimstone and turpentine!"

Bung drained his glass, while his companions were wrapt in drunken wonder.

"And what has the Popular Preacher to do with your story?" asked Timson. "You

was speaking of Snawlip and his wife, and now you ramble off into the Popular Preacher: Bah! Bung you're gettin' silly!"

"May I ask the name of the Popular Preacher?" exclaimed the unknown from the end of the table, and Bung as he was about to answer his question, could not but remark that the young man had changed color. His eyes were deeper sunken under the down-drawn brows, his lips trembled after he had spoken, and his whole appearance was changed and agitated.

"Eh! what do you say, my good fellow?" said Bung with a stupid stare.

"The name of the Preacher"—and the voice of the unknown, hoarse as with suppressed emotion, sounded strangely upon the ears of the boon companions. "Why do you not answer me? You know the Preacher. You perchance have his life at your finger's ends. Answer me—is his name——"

And bending over the table, until his agitated face was disclosed in every lineament by the flaring gas light, he repeated a name.

—It was a name familiar to the press and the people of every city, town and almost every hamlet in the Union—

A dead stillness prevailed as the young man awaited an answer.

Timson moved his chair back from the table, Widdy opened his eyes with a look of vague surprise, while the Medical student began to feel for his bowie knife. He did not like the looks of the stranger, and being somewhat troubled with a buzzing in his ears, combined with a mistiness of vision, he fell into the pleasing thought that the scene was to end in a fight—a real Medical student's fight, with revolvers and carving knives.

As for Bung he regarded the young man steadily for a few moments and then replied—

"That's the name. You know him then?"

"I know him," and the young man dropped into his chair.

"You have met him? Eh! Out somewhere in the West?"

"I never saw him," answered the young man, as he leaned forward, and buried his face in his hands, "And yet I know him well."

There was a sadness—a kind of latent meaning in his tone which penetrated even the

heart of these Sabbath evening boon-companions. For a few moments a breathless stillness prevailed, while every eye was fixed upon the stranger, who sat with his face concealed by his hands.

"You see my good fellow, there's a terrible time in town just now. Father Miller—the dear old boy—has predicted the End of the World. It comes off on the twenty-third of April next, and 'no postponement on account of the weather.'

"Well—do you hear my fellow? This has kicked up a great excitement all over town, and the *respectable* churches, although they denounce this Millerism, take advantage of it, to fill their churches, just as we good Democrats take advantage of a Bank excitement, to get charters for a dozen new Banks. Do you take?"

The stranger did not raise his head.

"And—d'y'e see? The Popular Preacher"—he repeated the name again as he tossed off a brimming glass of champagne—"The Popular Preacher arrives in town just in time to reap a golden harvest of converts and—"

"He is in town, then," cried the stranger; "Where is he to be seen?"

"He preaches to-night at St. Simon's—up town;" replied Bung, startled by the manner of the young man.

"At St. Simon's—" repeated the stranger, as he rose from his seat, and then without another word he moved abruptly to the door. The astonishment of the company may be imagined. Bung started from his chair, and in an instant was at the stranger's side.

"You want to see ——— very much. Do you?" he whispered. "There's no use in going to the church. You can't get in. It's seven o'clock, and by this time the aisles are packed, and the vestibule runs over with heads. Particular business—eh?"

The stranger uttered an exclamation, and laid his hand upon the door, when Bung pulled a card from his pocket, whispering—"Take that, my good fellow. Be there at twelve to-night. You shall see *him*. Now then, as I've done the fair thing with you, I want you to 'show your hand.' What's your business with *him*?"

"Why the fact is—" said the stranger, with a mournful attempt at a smile—"It's about a *marriage certificate*. But can I indeed see him at this place? You do not deceive me?" he continued hurriedly, as he read the letters on the card. "Come—be frank—this is no hoax—"

"On the honor of a Bung," replied the Dry Goods man with a drunken gravity, and a profound bow.

The bow was made to the panels of the door, for the stranger had glided from the room while Bung was speaking.

"Cool, dev'lish cool," said that gentleman, returning to the table. "Boys what do you make o' that chap, anyhow?"

No words can picture the blank amazement of the drinking party. The Broker said that he always had a low opinion of this man without a name, and as for himself, he did not believe that his name was good on paper anywhere, or for anything. The Medical Student, making a desperate effort to light a cigar, whispered something about calling up the waiter, in order to see whether their hats and cloaks were safe. At this crisis he came to a pause, for he had inserted the wrong end of the cigar in his mouth, and soon subsided into a spell of subdued swearing.

"Mysterious!" ejaculated Blink.

"Ahead of Harry Clay's last letter!" was the remark of Timson.

"I say what I think, gentlemen," exclaimed Widdleton, quietly filling his glass, "and I think that this fellow who left us so abruptly, is a suspicious character. Very likely a—Forger. Yes, a Forger. You need not stare so. A Forger! I repeat it. Capital Heidsick. Hand me a cigar, Blink!

As for Bung, he sat like a block of marble, his thumbs inserted in the arm-holes of his vest, while a strange cloud of perplexity twisted his brow into wrinkles,

Leaving this refined company—whose conversation we have pictured with great reluctance, and only on account of its vital connection with the thread of our history—let us follow the footsteps of the unknown.

CHAPTER SECOND.

A LOOK INTO THE MIRROR.

We now follow the steps of the young man whose singular demeanor has excited the wonder of the boon companions.

Leaving the scene of the Sabbath evening revel, he traversed the dimly lighted corridor of the Hotel, ascended a stairway, and after the lapse of a few moments, entered a small chamber, in which a lamp was burning. The lamp stood on a table in front of a mirror, between the bed and the fire-place, and near it appeared a large trunk, fastened with intricately arranged cords, and bearing on its front the initials, "C. D. L."

The Unknown entered the room, and closing the door, stood near the fire-place, gazing intently upon the trunk, his arms folded and his visage thoughtful and lowering. Not a word betrayed the cause or source of the emotion which seemed to convulse his whole being, but standing perfectly motionless and silent for a long time, he fixed his eyes upon the trunk or chest, while his lips moved, and his breast sank and fell under his clasped arms.

After a long pause, he knelt beside the trunk and removed the cords; his hand, which was at once muscular and delicately formed, trembling nervously in the action. Then, with his face turned to the light, he remained for some moments with the lid of the trunk half raised, in an attitude of hesitation or suspense.

He caught a glimpse of his countenance as it was reflected in the mirror, and seemed to start at the sight of the corrugated brow and deep sunken eyes. His entire manner betrayed the most powerful emotion, mingled with doubt and uncertainty.

Still no word indicated the nature of these thoughts, which impressed their stern shadows upon his face. We behold him kneeling in the centre of the silent room, the lid of the trunk half raised by one hand, as the other rests clenched and rigid upon his breast.

Again he caught a view of the mirror, and now it might be seen that a change had come over his face. Beneath each eye appeared a circle of livid blue—a distinct blackness, which increased the intensity of his eyes,

while it gave a deathly pallor to his cheeks and forehead.

Again the young man started, as if appalled by the sight of his face, or by some thought connected with that face whose eyes were envirced by that dark circle. He started, and a shudder crept through his veins. The lid of the trunk fell with a harsh echo. He buried his face in his hands.

We may not guess the thought or the association which made this strong man start and shudder at the reflection of his visage.

When he raised his face to the light again, his eyes were wet with tears, his face distorted with agony. Such agony as distorts the face of him who sees his 'best beloved' lowered slowly into the grave—sees the sunbeam linger for a moment on the coffin-lid—and then, as the shadows gather before his eyes, feels that a part of his soul is laid to rest in that unsightly cavity.

At length the Unknown, or Man without a Name, call him as you will, lifted the lid of the trunk with a rapid movement, and its contents were soon laid bare to the light. It seemed a kind of world in miniature, that dingy old chest, inscribed with the letters "C. D. L.," for it was divided into many compartments, separated from each other by all manner of locks and strings and lids, and hidden, one within the other, like the last Tariff under a bundle of Congressional speeches.

After strewing the carpet with the contents of the trunk, the 'Man without a Name,' drew forth a box of dark mahogany, the sight of which seemed to renew his emotion, and darken his face with a wilder agitation.

A spring was pressed and the lid of the box flew open. The young man turned his face away; it was a long while ere he could recover his firmness and gaze steadily upon the contents of the casket. You will remember that his agony was still silent—dumb—although it visibly writhed for utterance.

The contents of the casket were brought forth, one by one, and with a quivering hand. There was a package of letters—a massive paper or letter, secured by a large seal—and a single lock of hair, tied by a faded ribbon. These were all which the casket contained.

The Unknown took them one by one, and

passed them before the rays of the lamp, his features quivering in every lineament.

The document with the dark brown cover was endorsed with these words—

"TO ANNIE AND HARRY * * * *; THE LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT OF C. D. L."

When his gaze rested upon the lock of hair—it was soft and silky, and had a faint gloss about it still, although the ribbon which fastened it was faded, as if by the touch of years—his eyes filled once more with tears, and his whole frame bowed under the burden of his agony.

Then his look was arrested by the package of letters, which bore in a delicately traced character, the name "ELLEN." At sight of that word his nether lip was pressed between his teeth until it was stained with blood, and the veins began to swell upon his forehead. He seemed to pant for breath. Gazing upon the name "Ellen," with a strained and vacant eye, he murmured for the first time, an audible word—

"Ellen!" it was the Name—perchance the Name of some one sacred to Memory—a wife, a sister, or a mother.

The package of letters fell from his grasp. He fell, like a fainting man, against the trunk, and remained for several minutes with his forehead buried in his hands. Meanwhile his muscular frame was agitated in every fibre; he shook like an epileptic.

Rising at last, his face bedewed with tears, the livid circles marked darker and wider around his eyes, he took another casket from the trunk, and opening it, drew forth a slender phial, which was filled with a colorless liquid. Then, with the manner of one who has nerved his mind to some decisive Resolve, he took the letters, the Will and the tress of hair, and burying them in his bosom, approached the bed, with the light in one hand, the phial in the other. The bed was encircled by drooping curtains, adorned with long and snow-white fringes.

He placed the phial to his lips, and inserted the cork between his teeth, at the same moment holding the flame of the lamp near the bed-curtain. It would have wrung your heart to mark the expression of his face at this moment. There was doubt, horror, despair, impressed upon every line; the lips, colorless as the phial

which they clasped; the cheek like marble; the eyes leaden and glassy, as with the resolve of—Suicide.

But a better thought stole over his face—

Still grasping the light and the phial, he approached the mirror and gazed long and silently upon the reflection of his visage. His face was written there, upon the glittering surface with all its blanched cheeks and deep-set eyes rendered more wildly brilliant by the circles of livid blue. There was, nothing like personal vanity in this singular regard, which the young man cast upon the counterpart of his face.

"Death in the battle-field," he murmured, "I could bear that. But to slowly anticipate the hour, to know that my sentence is written, and that I must die with *all my work undone*—ah! It is much better to die now—*at once*—and by the poison phial!"

Once more he drew near the bed and calmly arranged the manner of his fate.

"My name must not go home coupled with the stigma of suicide"—these words uttered faintly may serve to indicate the current of his thoughts—"It will be said of me, that I died in the midst of a conflagration. And these precious trusts will die with me." He placed his hand upon his breast where he had concealed the Will, the Package and the tress of hair: "Annie and Harry—fifteen thousand dollars! They do not exist or they have long ago been torn away from the City, by the hand of poverty. As for the package of her letters, can I, *dare* I leave that last and most sacred trust unfulfilled?"

His countenance was softened in every lineament; while his eyes were wet with tears.

"Poor child! Even yet I feel the clasp of your death-chilled hand upon my wrist."

Then placing the lamp upon the coverlet he took the tress from his breast and pressed it to his lips, his face assuming a marble-like calmness. There was a kind of latent rapture in his gaze, as he resumed the lamp again and seated himself upon the bed, with the neck of the phial between his teeth. It was that peculiar expression which may be termed the Insanity of Suicide.

"Why should I live?" he said, as he surveyed

the deadly contents of the phial by the light of the lamp — "If I live I must *avenge*. Better to sleep at once, and be at rest than to be hunted from place to place like a second Cain by this deathless Memory. It is the work of an instant — a drop from the phial — a spark from the lamp — and I will feel no more."

But even as he spoke an icy feeling crept through his veins, and his gaze which had been calm and serene, flashed with the energy of a fearful Thought.

The Hereafter of the Suicide — this was the Thought.

It is a brave thing to die in battle amid the crash of carnage, when the heart is drunk with the fever of bloodshed? Then what manner of bravery is this, which in a solitary room, takes Death silently by the hand, and looks into the abyss of Eternity, shuddering but resolved?

"Ellen!" he pronounced the name slowly, dwelling upon each musical syllable, as though the word was his farewell to earth — "Ellen!" and the phial was inserted between his clenched teeth. His extended hand held the light near the curtains of the bed. "In a moment all will be over —"

But in that fearful moment a knock was heard at the door, startling the death-like stillness with its harsh echo.

"I am come," said a mild voice which penetrated the panels of the door.

Starting from the bed, the young man placed the light upon the table, and hurriedly concealed the phial within his breast, while his face was reddened by a sudden glow. Should he unlock the door, or should he remain silent, until the questioner departed? For a moment he hesitated, trembling all the while, but again he voice was heard —

"I am come!"

CHAPTER THIRD.

"THE FIRST OF SEVEN."

The young man placed his hand against the panels of the door, and exclaimed in a broken voice — "Whom do you seek?" There was a pause, and the answer was heard distinctly:

"I received a letter to-day signed C. D. L., which requested my presence this evening at room No. 92, of this Hotel."

No sooner had these words penetrated his ears, than the Unknown hastily arranged his hair, so as to hide the emotions written on his forehead, and endeavored to look calm and unconcerned. The attempt was made with all the energy of a desperate resolve, and was in a great degree successful. When he unclosed the door he looked for all the world like a gentleman who has been interrupted in the midst of some accustomed task; all traces of Suicide were banished from his face.

The person who entered was a man of middle age, rather below the medium stature, with a pallid face, worn in every lineament by grief more than years. He was attired in a black frock coat, buttoned to the neck, and exhibiting some indications of poverty or negligence in its thread-bare seams. He lifted the broad-rimmed hat from his forehead, and the young man discovered that his brown hair, worn short and cut closely about the temples, was streaked with silver.

"This is your letter, I believe?" and the intruder fixed his large grey eyes upon the face of the Unknown, with a look which was at once kind and vacant. Taking the letter the young man read these words: —

To the Rev. William Marvin —

You are said to devote your time to the relief of the poor and distressed. A stranger who has heard of you, and who has a claim upon your sympathy — for he has suffered much — desires to see you to-night, at the — Hotel, Room 92. It is a matter of life and death.

C. D. L.

"This is indeed my letter," said the Unknown, handing a chair to Mr. Marvin, "You have conferred a very great favor, by your presence here to-night. Be seated, sir — I have much to say to you."

And presently seated near the table, with his pale cheek resting on his hand, Mr. Marvin gazed intently into the remarkable face of the young man, as he listened to his hurried words. It was an incredible Revelation which trembled in emphatic sentences from his lips, and the Preacher, who had seen much of the world and made his home amid the homes of the suffering, could not restrain his tears.

"And it is to you, Sir, that I wish to entrust this last charge, confided to me by the dying."

His statement concluded with these words, as he laid his hand upon the arm of the Preacher: "You traverse the wide city in your mission of love. There is no place, no court, no avenue, no den of poverty nor haunt of shame forbidden to your feet. You may discover these children—possibly in some miserable hovel, buried under the burden of necessity and want. Take this packet—if you discover Annie and Harry, use it for their support and education—and—"

He tore the seal and envelope from the packet; and the Preacher to his astonishment saw fifteen bank notes, each marked with the figures 1000, spread forth upon the table.

"And in case your search is made in vain, and you do not discover these children after a year, I authorize you to use this money as your heart suggests."

And without another word the young man pressed fifteen thousand dollars in the hands of the listener, who seemed to be entirely confounded by the action. He sat gazing vacantly into the face of the Unknown—a breathless stillness ensued.

"This is madness," he murmured at last, "to entrust an entire stranger with an amount like this. No—young man—I cannot receive the money. I will search for the children, but as for the money—"

"Do I not tell you—must I confirm it by an oath?—That I am forced to leave the city without delay,"—the Unknown seized his arm, and looked earnestly into his face—"You alone can fulfil the trust of the dead. Do not refuse my request—do not, I beseech you in the name of the dead"—

Mr. Marvin placed his hand upon his forehead, and seemed absorbed in thought, while the young man, with suspense painted on his visage, anxiously awaited his answer.

"Young man," he whispered in a changed voice—"It is wrong to place temptation in the way of a man who wishes to do well. How know you that I will not use this money for my own purposes?" he continued, gazing upward from the shadow of his hand—"Fifteen thousand dollars! It is a world of money—"

"Use it as your heart suggests," exclaimed the Unknown. "That is all I ask of you. I am satisfied to trust you. That is enough. If

you do not discover Harry or Annie after a year is gone, then the money is yours."

"But what induced you to send for me?" cried the Preacher in an agitated voice. "I have no Church; am known to but few of the wealthy or distinguished of our citizens. My name and my labors are alike obscure. I am a man subject to the same temptations as other men and of all temptations, that of money. No, no—the idea of such a trust committed to me, is preposterous. I cannot think of it."

He rose from his chair and took his hat, and moved toward the door. It was evident that his mind was resolved. But the Unknown also rose, and grasped his hand, looking intently into his care-worn face.

"William Marvin," said he, bending down so that every word pierced the listener's ear, "Do you remember the Fifth of March, 1842?"

"The Fifth of March? What mean you?"

"On that day, a Stranger who had been taken ill in Philadelphia, while on his homeward journey, was about being carried from the great Hotel to the Hospital—his disease was small pox, and of the most pestilential character—when William Marvin appeared and conveyed him to his own home, and waited upon him till he died."

"Ah—I remember," cried the Preacher. "It was some months ago, but—"

"What has this Stranger's death to do with my request?" interrupted the Unknown. "He was my brother. You perilled the lives of those most dear to you, in order to serve him. That is enough—take the money—do with it as your heart dictates."

Marvin was confounded.

"Then your name is—" he began.

"Never mind my name, dear sir. I have come to this city for one purpose—for one purpose only—and do not desire to be known by the friends of my family residing in Philadelphia."

Still Marvin hesitated.

"Where shall I direct a letter in case my search is successful?" he asked.

"To-morrow you will know," replied the young man with a smile—a smile which did not altogether please the humble Preacher.

He stood hesitating, his eyes dilating, as he surveyed the countenance of the young man

It may be well to remark that the face of the Preacher, calm and placid in its outlines, sometimes was ruffled by an expression of singular meaning, which corrugated his brow, and gave a nervous restlessness to his gaze. This expression now agitated his features as he exclaimed:

"I am not worthy of this trust, young man. Nay — do not start and look incredulous. I am not worthy — I am not worthy —"

His tone was imbued with an accent of inexpressible sorrow, or — Remorse.

"You are not worthy," said the Unknown. "*Who* then is worthy? Go to — you carry your modesty into extravagance. You were a bother to my brother in his dying hour, and I would entrust you with the price of a world."

"But there are many good men in this great city who would be much worthier of your trust than myself, even had I not —" he paused abruptly, and his pale cheek flushed with sudden warmth. "Even had I not many years ago committed a crime for which my present life is but a continued penance."

His voice changed, and he turned his face away, while the 'Man without a Name' gazed upon him in silent amazement.

"You commit a crime — You!" he cried — "I cannot believe it. No — no! Take the money. Do not force me to repeat my request. Take the money, and after the lapse of a year do with it as your heart dictates. Yet stay — in your search after these children, you will encounter many scenes of distress — scenes of heart-rending misery. I'm a wayward fellow — not one whit better than any young man of my age and tastes — but still I have some kind of feeling for those poor devils who have no crust for their table; not even a rag to cover them from the winter's cold. Here are a hundred dollars, in gold too; take it and give it away."

The poor Preacher was too much astounded to reject the purse which the young man forced into his hands. These kind of things are by no means customary in this lower world, save in a melo-drama, or the Arabian Nights, and we may therefore account for Mr. Marvin's dumb amazement. He looked at the Unknown, as you might survey a lunatic whose disease has assumed a mild and melancholy

form, and clinked the gold in his hand in an absent way.

"I will humor him;" the thought crossed his mind, as he hesitated near the door. "By the bye, my young friend, I will cheerfully consent to become your agent for the distribution of the hundred dollars — although this, to be sure, is an amazing sum — but, as to the other matter, you must excuse me."

"Well — well — on one condition. That you will come here to-morrow at eight o'clock — remember the hour" — his face was illuminated by a faint smile — "and *then I will give you a reason for my request, which you cannot possibly surmount.*"

The last words were spoken with peculiar emphasis.

"There are many Clergymen who would be happy to undertake this fearful responsibility," said William Marvin, as he laid his hand upon the door — "Good men, beloved by all who know them. There is ———," he named a celebrated Divine, renowned for his palace and five thousand a year — "or there is a zealous and eloquent man, the very Apostle of the age ———"

He named the Popular Preacher, but the words died on his lips, as he saw the countenance of the young man, which had changed in every feature; the lips lost their hues of life, while the eyes sunken deeper in their sockets, assumed an ominous and sinister glare.

"The Popular Preacher! he would indeed be the very man for a trust like this! A quiet and a godly man I believe, who devotes his days to thought, his evenings to the revival room, and his nights to ——— by the bye, I have forgotten, *how does he spend his nights?*"

The sneer which distorted his face impressed the poorly-clad Marvin with a feeling akin to fear. He retreated to the door, when he was arrested by the voice of the Unknown, changed once more to its accustomed tone —

"You have not told me the name of your Church, my good Marvin," he said, putting his hand upon his shoulder in a careless way. "And your belief — what is it?"

"My church is almost without a name," answered Marvin, as the light which had illumined the young man's eyes seemed transferred to his own, only it was sad in its in-

tensity, while the gaze of the other had been malignant. "Once I was a member of the ——— Church, but I have received the truth of Prophecy and listened to the voice uttered by the Revelations. Do not smile, my young friend—I beseech you do not follow the example of all the world, and mock me, for my heart is strongly inclined to you. I am a believer in the approaching end of all things. A little while and lo! the world which now is slumbering in its sin and shame, will be awakened by the doom of Sodom and Gomorrah. The End draws near—yea—before three months have gone their way, this world shall expire in the flames which issue from its own bosom—" his voice rose, his features brightened with an inexplicable rapture, and his eyes gathered new fire as he concluded—"When the Old World hath passed away, then will the Lord come to dwell in the new Heaven and the new Earth, then indeed will the captives of misery and want 'return to Zion with songs and with gladness on their heads.'"

"In plain words you are—a Millerite," interrupted the young man with a laugh. "Well—well—every one has a right to be mad in his own way. Come in the morning—eight o'clock, you remember—good night."

Thus abruptly dismissed, the poor Preacher turned to the door, raising the gold pieces towards the light, and murmuring as he saw them glitter in his hand—"An hundred dollars; that is an hundred lives. I will have no rest until—"

He closed the door after him and was gone, leaving the Unknown in the centre of the room. After a while we will follow the humble Millerite on his way, and see how he dispenses the hundred dollars—for the present let us watch the movements of the Unknown. Did the purpose so calmly entertained again visit the heart of the young man?

"St. Simon's," he muttered, "I may see *him* there. It is better, much better, to close the account with *him*, before my 'end of the world' draws nigh. It was *her last* request."

Taking his cloak from a chair, he assumed an otter-skin cap, which shaded his features from observation, and stood ready to depart.

"Now for St. Simon's!" he moved to the door and started back as suddenly; "Another knock! Who can it be? I am favored with visitors this evening. Come in!"

CHAPTER FOURTH.

A GLANCE AT THE DAILY COPPER.

In answer to the last words the door was opened, and a tall individual stepped over the threshold with a shambling gait. How he was dressed does not concern us, but he was a man of awkward figure, with lean and long limbs, loosely put together, and as for his face, it was altogether destitute of character—such a face as you might see a thousand times and forget the next moment, without the least difficulty.

"This No. 92, I believe? You wrote a letter to the Daily Copper, desiring an interview with one of the Editors?"

"You are right, sir. I desire to converse a little while with one of the Editors of that paper on a matter of much importance. You bear a note for me I presume?"

"I am the Editor," said the lank personage, with considerable dignity. "That is," he continued by way of qualification—"the first Sub-Editor."

And the gentleman dropped into a chair, depositing his "lengthy" limits somewhere between the bed and the fire-place.

"Now, Sir, I am waiting on you," said the Sub-Editor. "I have just five minutes, and then I must go, for we expect a steamer in, and Europe's very unsettled. Very unsettled."

The Unknown gazed with a quiet wonderment upon this singular phantom of the press, who looked for all the world like the decayed Ghost of some dead paragraph on the state of the money market.

Shall we, for a moment, take a quiet glance at the Daily Copper, while its Sub-Editor sits waiting for the young man to commence the conversation?

The Daily Copper was one of those Moral Monsters, which are as necessary to the Great City, as malaria to a swamp, or poison to a druggist's shelves. Every night it was whirled from the steam-press, and sent reeking by the hands of an hundred carriers through the streets of the Great City, so that the good

people might devour it with their morning muffin.

It was an independent sheet—as those who had not bought it, discovered to their cost—an impartial paper—as those who did buy its columns knew to their serene satisfaction. It knew no party, but the party which brought it pennies. It was simple in its religion, for from the press room under ground to the editor's garret in the sky, it worshipped the Dollar with all its soul. As its press kept thundering on, through the silence of the night, it seemed—so the lonely wayfarer thought—to be a kind of infernal organ, doomed to make demoniac discord under ground, and groan in a prolonged anthem, *dollar, DOLLAR, DOLLAR*.

And the columns of the Daily Paper displayed a variety of literary matter, such indeed as made it suitable for families. In one column it was moral, in another atheistical, and its moral articles oftentime stood cheek by jowl with a Restell advertisement, or the announcement of some infamous poisoner, whose loathsome profession looked quite holy at—fifty cents per square.

It had libelled every body and praised every body in its turn, and taken all sides of all questions. For Phrenology to-day and against it to-morrow. Now Magnetism was a science—again a humbug. One day the Irish shot the Natives in Kensington; but to-morrow it was the Natives who shot the Irish, and the day after—both Irish and Natives dropping the Daily Copper—it was discovered that nobody was shot at all. A paper among papers was *THE* Daily Copper. For Multicaulis when it was up and against it when it was down. Copper Stock found favor in its columns when its native brass failed to keep the Sheriff from the door, but always, and through all its difficulties it was true to the Copper Cent, and fervent in its worship of the Silver Dollar.

How it was edited no one knew, although a daily leader in one corner, written with ability smacked strongly of New York, while the paragraphs by its side, gave a reminiscence of the Sub-Editor who in his garret, away up in the sky, kept churning all day long the crank of his pulseless brain, alternating between severe attacks of Dyspepsia and heroic devotion to his Scissors. Like a spider in his hole, he sat there gloomily, shut out from all the

charms of life, and condemned to spin his imbecility into the web of next morning's paper.

He was not alone, however, in his task. There were other purveyors of the Daily Copper who prowled about the community, gathering venom and pennies for its columns, and stabbing at characters in the dark. These were not paid for their work; they merely used the Daily Copper to puff up the last speculation; it was the safety valve of their pockets and their spleen.

"Your name, sir, is—" began the Unknown, surveying the lank Sub-Editor with a wondering stare.

"Slinkum Scissleby. Sub-Editor of the Daily Copper. There's ten of us."

The conversation which then took place has a vital connection with the secrets of our narrative, and—who knows!—but that it touched upon those mysteries of the Daily Copper, which never yet have reached the public gaze.

At the proper place we shall describe the scene which occurred between the Unknown and Slinkum Scissleby. For the present we drop the mantle of silence over its words and deeds; it was a half an hour in progress, which the reader will imagine passed and gone, when we resume the thread of our history again. After the Sub-Editor had departed, and the Unknown was alone once more, there was another knock at his door.

CHAPTER FIFTH.

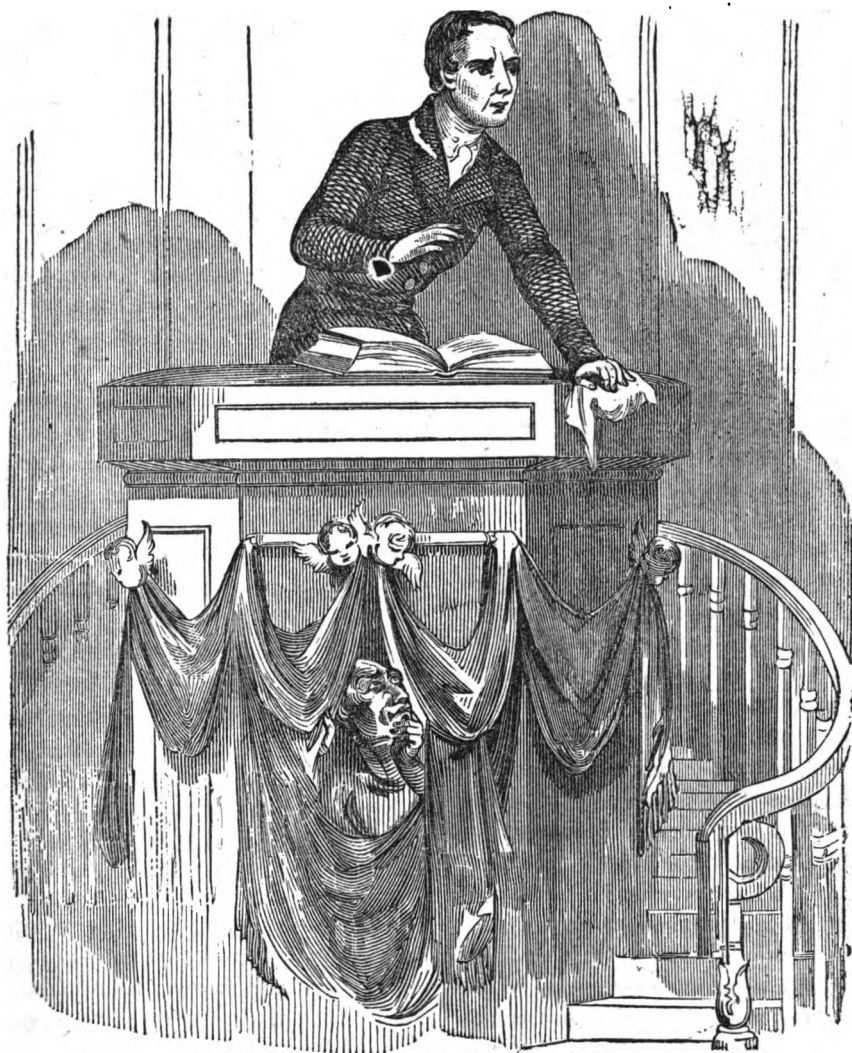
THE THIRD VISITER.

"Come in!"

The door did not open slowly on this occasion, but rather sprung open with a sudden crash. If the Unknown had manifested surprise at the appearance of his previous visitors, he now displayed something so much deeper in its nature that we cannot give it a name.

He stood—not like a statue as all the Romancers have it—but like a living man stricken suddenly in every vein with an overwhelming wonder, mingled, it may be, with a deeper feeling.

"How do Charley. Cold ev'nin'" said a gruff voice—very gruff in fact, resembling the sound produced by an indefinite number of pebbles rolling over a plate of sheet iron.



The intruder advanced and stood face to face with the Unknown. Imagine a form at least six feet one inch in stature, with broad shoulders, bulky chest, and iron limbs, with sinews like whip-cords. This form is enveloped in a huge great coat, blazing red in color, with two rows of white buttons down the front, each the size of a dollar. Beneath the coat, reaching to the knees, appear trousers of the roughest corduroy, inserted in the tops of boots which have been innocent of brush or blacking for at least a score of years. Above it, or rather above a neckerchief of some indescribable plaid, you catch a substantial vision of a sun-burnt face, with whiskers like flakes of snow, and eyes flashing like hickory coals from underneath the front of a cap of coarse grey fur.

This personage—who reminds you of the Belgian Giant in his leisure moments, when he drops his graver duties, and pays a quiet visit to a friend—stands with his hands in the pockets of his fire-brand coat, and his cap drawn over his ears, almost over his eyes, while a gruff expression, something between a smile and a scowl, stamps his mouth and cheeks.

"Peter my good fellow—P-e-e-ter!" cried the Unknown in ludicrous amazement, "where did you drop from? You here? You of all men! A minute ago I'd a-sworn you were a thousand miles away. Why Pe-ter.

The gentleman with the white whiskers and fire-brand coat dropped—emphatically dropped—into a chair, still keeping his bony hands in his capacious pockets.

"Old friend of the family. Thought you wanted looking arter. Concluded to come. Am here. That's the sum-total."

Peter seemed to utter these condensed sentences by a ventriloquial effort, for his lips, scarcely unclosed, while his harsh voice might have been heard in the next room.

"And you are here, the very man I wanted to see! I'm half wild with joy. Do give me a shake of your hand."

The young man made a well-intentioned effort to discover a hand in one of those roomy recesses in the red coat, but Peter shrugged his shoulders, with the exclamation—

"Nonsense—gammon! Sit down and behave 'self. What you arter in Fildelfy? Run

off from home—you did. What caper now?"

At these words the expression of hilarity, which had enlivened the young man's face passed away, and was succeeded by a look of apathetic gloom. He did not answer, but fixed his eyes upon the floor.

"What's up?" asked Peter, lighting a huge cigar with his bony fingers, by the light of the lamp. "Anything uncommon?"

"Indeed, Peter, I thought you were in Illinois," answered the Unknown, keeping his eyes on the floor—"At all events, no nearer than Cincinnati. And now you are here—here, just in the nick of time. You can help me, Peter, and I know you will."

In answer to this, Peter puffed away like a locomotive, filling the room with a thick and, by no means fragrant cloud.

"Know'd your daddy. Your mammy, also. All your folks," he exclaimed, in his ventriloquial way. "Know'd Ellen."

There was a change in his gruff tone, and a singular twitching of his features, as he uttered the two last words. He took the cigar from his mouth, and raised his bony knuckles to his eyes.

"Sixty years old next March, but I'll never forget her. I know'd Ellen when she was a baby. I know'd her when she was this high"—patting his knee with his hand, and then his harsh voice sunk again—"Know'd her when she was a gal o' sixteen—bloomin', bloomin' like a garden full o' roses. Know'd her when she was a corpse. By thunder! Guess I did."

As Peter continued his remarks, uttered in his peculiar manner, the head of the young man dropped slowly, and he gathered his arms tightly over his breast.

"What's up?" exclaimed Peter, shutting one eye, and laying his hand on his shoulder, as he looked sideways into the face of the young man.

"You have your pistols with you, Peter?"

"Never travels without 'em."

"Take this card. You know the street, maybe the house?"

"Well, it aint a-goin' to injure my character if I say I do. Go ahead."

"Be there at twelve to-night. Have a cab or coach with you. Don't fail me Peter."

"Did I ever?"

"And Peter, do you hear, you may bring something with you that will serve to tie somebody's hands."

"Of course. It's best to be quiet. Might disturb some sick person," said Peter, closing his eyes, as he emitted an enormous cloud from his lips.

"And a kerchief Peter, or something to keep an unwilling person very still. You understand?"

Peter uttered a sound, intended for an answer in the affirmative; it was something between a groan and a growl.

"You will understand all this at the proper time. And now I must be going. Stay here, or where you please until it is time for you to meet me, but don't follow me. Till then, good night, my old friend."

The young man had drawn his cap over his eyes and hurried from the room, leaving Peter alone, with the delicate card between his clumsy fingers. It was of course the card which Bung had given to the Unknown an hour before. The conversation which we have briefly written occupied but a few moments, and it was evident from the manner of the parties, that they thoroughly understood each other.

Peter puffed away at his cigar, holding the card turned to the light and endeavouring to read the inscription with one eye closed. Altogether he presented a singular subject for a pencil sketch. His red coat with white buttons, his sun-burnt face half concealed by his fur cap, his corduroy trousers inserted in the tops of his clumsy boots; all furnished the details for a striking picture. Surround this gruff portrait with wreaths of cigar smoke, which make it resemble the picture of some good Genie of the Arabian Nights, and your sketch is complete.

"Fine room, this. Do things up nice this a-way. Hey? What's that?"

Reaching forth his hand, Peter grasped the phial which the Unknown had left on the table. You might see a change pass over his bluff face as he held this phial between his eyes and the light.

"An' its come to *this*; has it! Thought so. Must be wretched."

After he had uttered these words, Peter

placed his limbs upon a chair, and tilted the one on which he sat against the wall, resigning himself to the charms of his chair, and — perchance — to a dreamy fit of meditation. For a quarter of an hour a breathless stillness prevailed. After this time, as the State House was striking Nine! Peter broke the silence with these words:

"Know'd her when a corpse, I did."

That was all, but as Peter uttered them, a great tear rolled down his sunburnt cheek.

CHAPTER SIXTH.

"ST. SIMON."

"You cant get in," said an angry voice, "so there's no use of your pushin' in that way. Don't stick your elbows in my sides. My sides are my own and they're paid for, which is more than you can say of your coat."

These words were uttered in the centre of a dense crowd which spread from the doors of the Church to the railing which separates the area in front of the building from the public street. The moon was shining brightly over the opposite side of the street, and upon the roofs of the houses, which extended in striking perspective to the north and to the south. The front of the Church was in shadow, and therefore the crowd pushed and jostled and surged to and fro like a drunken man, but all in twilight gloom. There was an indistinct outline of hats and caps, with here and there a bonnet, but the faces of the throng were lost to view.

From whence the voice proceeded that uttered the aforesaid words, we cannot tell, at least, we cannot speak definitely. It was somewhere in the crowd. Now it was near the railing, again it was heard from the very portal of the Church, and once or twice it squeaked faintly far down, as though it was trodden under foot and scraped against the pavement.

We are very glad that the moonlight does not shine upon the Church, or we might be forced to describe its exterior. As it is our business is with the interior not the outside. Nor do we feel ourselves under an obligation to tell in what part of the Quaker City the Church was situated. That would expose our motives to misconstruction, and we should be charged — especially by people who never go to church

at all — with personal reflections upon a particular Church. We prefer to leave the question of the locality of the Church open for discussion, satisfied that the gossips of the town will locate it to their own satisfaction, and at least in twenty different places. Lest we should be accused of a contrary fault — to wit, of 'telling too little' — we will state for the information of the curious, that it was not in Camden, nor was it west of Broad Street. Further, that it was not south of Market Street, much less was it north of Poplar Street. To return, however, to the crowd whom we left struggling in front of the doors —

"Punch your elbow in my side agin, and I'll have the law on you," said the shrill voice, which we have heard before; "Jist do it if you dare. O-o-o!"

This long drawn sound was produced by a singular catastrophe. The owner of the voice found himself buried in his own hat, which some person to him unknown, had more suddenly than kindly knocked over his eyes.

This person unknown, was none other than the young man, "C. D. L." who in his bearskin overcoat and fur cap was making desperate efforts to reach the door. He used his elbow with great power, striking right and left and maintaining every inch of ground which he had won, while his progress was greeted by a chorus of groans and — we had almost said — curses.

"Them's my feet."

"Get out will you? Don't you see there's a lady all mashed to death in that corner —

"O-o-o-o! I never saw sich people. You really ought to behave better" —

"Where did you get them elbows? D'you sharpen 'em with a hone? — Do that agin, and I'll —"

"My good-ness! If I ever! What scrambling' and pushin'. No respect for age."

"Young man you'd better knock a-body down at once — you had —"

"Where's my hat? Stop kickin' that hat — a-a-h! If I could only ketch you my feller!"

But in defiance of these exclamations, our Unknown fought steadily onward, until at last he gained the door of the Church — it was only one step above the pavement — when bracing his back against the door-post, he sur-

vayed the crowd through whose angry waves he had won his way.

"My good friends," he said blandly, and yet in a voice which rose above their murmurs — "I am a stranger in the city. Can you tell me what is going on?"

This was decidedly insulting. The crowd received his question with a strange commingling of murmurs. One man who stood nearer the door than the others, answered in a hoarse voice —

"It's the Popular Preacher!" he pronounced the Name for which we have substituted these two words — "All the town's mad to hear him. We are, too, but we can't get in."

"You'll have to fight your way up stairs, after all," said another voice — "The meeting's up stairs, and I know the stairs and the the vestibule are as full as a barrel of molasses."

It was an undertaking of great difficulty, but the Unknown braced himself for the effort. Into the lower vestibule and up the crowded stairs, until he stood in the upper vestibule, where a mass of heads were illumined by a burst of light pouring through an unclosed door of the Church itself. It was a work of great difficulty, but he won his way. Every step that he advanced he could not but remark that the crowd grew more composed, and when he reached the upper vestibule he saw an hundred silent faces bathed in tears. Men and women were there, rich and poor together, all hushed as death, their eyes fixed and their lips parted, while a dense heat made the place oppressive and — almost — pestilential.

Toward the door which opened into the body of the Church, the Unknown silently but steadily pursued his difficult way. He could not yet look in upon the vast Congregation, much less see the Preacher, whose eloquence produced this awful stillness, but suddenly he heard the low accents of the Preacher's voice.

At that moment, he stood within a yard of the great door, opening from the vestibule into the Church — nay, he caught a side glance of a part of the congregation, and saw a portion of the gallery, packed with innumerable faces.

He heard the Preacher's voice, very low, scarcely above a whisper, and yet that voice was heard above the beatings of a thousand

hearts. At the sound he ceased to advance; he seemed to be stricken into stone, as the low accent of the Preacher came to his ears.

"It is he," he said, and bit his lip, and drew his cap deeper over his brow, and stood amid the dense crowd with folded arms. You will remember that he had never heard the voice before—was it an instinct of the Soul that now persuaded him that it was the voice of the *Preacher whom he sought?* And through the awful stillness of Church and vestibule the voice of the Preacher was distinctly heard, clear and musical as a silver bell, and yet taking hold of every pulse with its quivering accents.

He was speaking of the fast approaching End of the World. True, he did not admit the truth of Father Miller's calculation, but he said Suppose the End of the world was to come on the Twenty-third of April—and on this supposition he slowly began to build a terrible awe in every heart. There was in truth an awful power in this Man's voice. His words perhaps on paper might not bear criticism, but his voice was an instrument of supernatural might. He was speaking of the fast approaching End of the World, and with that subdued tone, went on to picture the World sleeping in the night before its destruction, until every detail was printed on the hearts of thousands. Then his voice suddenly rung like a thunder clap—quivering as with sympathy for a world in flames—it was answered by a thousand other voices, shrieking, wailing, groaning—pealing with joy or maddening with horror—and over all the tone of the Preacher pronounced the words—

"Then the Angel shall stand upon the sea and the earth, and lift up his hand to heaven, and swear by him that liveth for ever and for ever, that there shall be time no longer."

Words are vain to describe the effect of these words. There was a sound as though the throbs of a thousand hearts had found a voice—a loud, prolonged, and wailing sound, as though a multitude were tossing in the ocean waves, and uttering their last cry ere they sank forever.

The young man, standing in the shadow, caught the common fear, and shuddered he knew not why. The awful influence which

pervaded the vast throng crept through his veins, his soul went tossing to and fro on the wave of that indefinable excitement.

"Can it be the *same man?*" he groaned—"Would I might see his face, if only for a moment!" He had never seen the face of the *Preacher whom he sought*, and yet—such was his thought—he would know it at the first glance.

He dashed madly forward, and reached the door—yes, stood upon its very threshold—but a black wall rose before him, and over that wall of human forms, packed along the aisles, he caught a glimpse of the galleries, tapestried with faces. But he obtained not even a glimpse of the Preacher or the pulpit, although his voice penetrated his soul.

That voice was low again—and silvery as a bell—and it was picturing the joys of Heaven to the Redeemed.

"There the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest. * * * And there shall be no night there: and they need no candle, neither light of the sun, for the Lord God giveth them light. * * * And the Spirit and the Bride say come: And let him that heareth say Come, and let him that is athirst Come."

Sentences such as these selected from the most beautiful and affecting pages of Scripture fell from his lips, and were answered by sobs, by shrieks, and here and there some woman's voice pealing a shout of joy—joy that seemed kindled at the very altar of eternity.

And the young man, buried in the crowd which filled both Church and vestibule with a mass of palpitating life, felt his heart melt within him at these indescribably beautiful pictures of freed Spirits wandering by still waters in the light of Eternity—of weary heads pillowed in eternal rest, upon the breast of the Redeemer—of a calm bright world beyond the grave, where there is no more sorrow nor sighing nor tears, but youth and immortality in the presence of God. He felt his heart melt within him, and sighed from the depths of his heart, as the tears rolled down his cheeks.

"It cannot be the same man," he murmured—"The picture is true by whomever painted—true—but the Preacher is *not the same*."

No! no! But then the name is the same, and have I not heard of his wondrous powers of voice before?"

The calm joys of the Blessed in another World—a world of love and light—this thought it was that touched the Unknown to tears.

"It cannot be the same. No—No. And yet I'd give the best year of my life for a glimpse at his face."

Struck by a sudden thought the young man hurriedly left the vestibule, and made his way down stairs. Before a moment elapsed he stood upon the threshold of the church, and through the shadows saw the noisy crowd tossing like a wave, of hats and bonnets, from the door to the street. But now the noise and uproar grated harshly on his feelings. Possessed by the thought which had impelled his sudden retreat from the church, the young man forced his way through the mass and struck into a narrow alley, which divided the edifice from the adjoining buildings. He pursued his way along the dark avenue, until emerging in the moonlight, he saw the rear wall of the Church—a blank wall, whose uniformity was only broken by four large windows—illuminated brightly by the silver light.

"My idea was not so far from right after all," he murmured, as he lifted his eyes to the lower windows—"The air is very warm within, and they have raised a window. Hark!"

The sound of the Preacher's voice came through the opened window, mingled with cries and sobs, and shouts of joy or anguish. The light from within shone through the blinds, and struggled with the rays of the moon.

"I may pass into the Church through that window," he soliloquized—"At last I may obtain a glimpse of the Preacher's face."

But a difficulty presented itself which at first view seemed insurmountable. The lower windows of the Church were at least ten feet above his head. Casting his eyes around the narrow yard—there was a grave and a solitary tombstone in a dusky corner—the young man discovered a plank leaning against the fence. It did not require much effort to place this plank against the window sill. This accomplished, the Unknown began his ascent with something like a smile upon his lips.

"This looks like burglary," he laughed, "certainly like Church-breaking!"

The laugh soon died away, for reaching the sill of the window, he heard the Preacher's voice. Raising the blinds as gently as possible, he looked within—he saw the Preacher's face.

For a moment he hesitated and then quietly slipped under the blinds, and found himself in the Church, not ten paces from the Pulpit where the Preacher stood—

—Before we picture the scenes which he beheld, let us revert to the conversation which took place between him and the Sub-Editor at the Hotel, about an hour ago.

CHAPTER SEVENTH.

SLINKUM SCISSLBY AND THE UNKNOWN.

"The Sub-Editor of the Daily Copper," exclaimed the young man, "I am glad to see you, sir. Your name sir is—"

"Slinkum Scissleby," said the Sub-Editor quickly.

"My business with you may be stated in a few words," continued the Unknown, as he stood with his arms folded and leaned against the mantle—"Do you remember a letter which appeared in your paper about sixteen months ago?"

Scissleby moved quickly in his chair, and elevated his eyebrows.

"Remember a letter which appeared in our paper sixteen months ago? Not a bit of it. As well ask me if I remember all the advertisements which have appeared in our columns, from the marriages and deaths, down to the quack notices in one corner."

Having thus relieved his mind, Scissleby relapsed into a sort of leaden stupor, with his eyes fixed upon the cap of his knee.

"There appeared a letter in your paper, signed with the initials P. X., and bearing the name of a town in a western state at its head. It was written from that town by some able correspondent of yours, and inserted doubtless in your paper, as a choice piece of news. This you will say was all in the usual routine. Your paper was printed, everybody read it in this city, and a hundred copies found their way to the town which I have mentioned. Be patient, sir—in a moment I will have done.

There was a young girl in that town, who, beautiful and gifted, and just starting into womanhood, was the angel of a household. A father, a mother, and two brothers, regarded the daughter and sister with an affection boundless to idolatry. This seems rather a dull story—does it not?"

Scissleby shifted in his chair, nodding his head very violently.

"This girl then;"—there was a distortion of the young man's features, and he paused as if to gather command over his feelings—"This young girl, living in the light of her father's fireside, was a very happy thing; full of life and hope, and having such a light and smile about her face, that the very beggars who wandered through the town—perchance they were emigrants from other lands, who sick at heart and very, very poor, had journeyed to our country in search of the mere means of life—were won by her cheerful look, and after receiving bread from her hands, spoke of her in their prayers in all their future life, as the good angel, who had once upon a time lightened the darkness of their desolate way. But, Pshaw! This is all romance—is it not?"

Scissleby nodded, and arranged one of his limbs upon two chairs.

"Well—well—this girl whose very innocence was the seed of her undoing—this child who every night knelt to receive her father's blessing after the evening prayer—was deceived by a wretch who came to that happy home clad in all the externals of virtue and honor. For a while the shame was locked within her bosom; at last it was known to father and brother, and the seducer on his knees, begged for permission to seal his repentance by a marriage. They were married—lived very happily for two weeks when your paper came to this far-off town"—

He paused and buried his face between his hands which rested on the mantle; Scissleby growing impatient, carefully removed his limb from the chairs, and replaced it by the other limb, which it may be proper to remark was of the same length.

"Your paper came to town," resumed the young man, as he advanced a step, his brow corrugated and his hands clenched, "and this young wife—my sister sir—saw her own

name written there coupled with every epithet of dishonor. 'She had been a common thing before her marriage—a precocious profligate whose favors were bestowed upon libertines more base than herself.' This was the story of your paper, sir—my sister read it. The whole town flung it in her face, by hints and whispers. In the very Church of God she was pointed at as the foul creature whose infamy had been proclaimed in the 'Daily Copper.' Do you understand me, sir?"

"Don't hit me. You'd better not," cries Scissleby, bouncing from his chair and assuming an attitude of lank dignity, as the young man approached him with his hands clenched and his brow darkened by emotion—"Observe, sir, that when you strike me you strike the Daily Copper."

"This letter in your paper, written by a person without a name, and published by you to all the world, did its work in a very short time. Two months after the paper reached our town there was a funeral—people talked in whispers round the grave, and those who had sneered now began to pity, for she looked so very sad and beautiful as she lay in her coffin. I had been absent six months—a tour to Europe took me from home—the whole story of my sister's marriage and her broken heart—was utterly unknown to me. I came home, and sought my sister, and found her in the graveyard. Her husband too was not there—he too was away from his 'home'—he had left his dying wife on account of the charges contained in your paper, that is, in your correspondent's letter. Now, sir, this you will say is a very pretty story—"

His voice fell, and he pressed his hand against his throat, as though his agitation had choked his utterance. Advancing toward Scissleby he laid his hand upon his shoulder, and bent down until his breath fanned the cheek of the Sub-Editor—

"Now, Sir, I have sent for you in order to ask you a simple question. Answer it or not, just as you please. *How much did your correspondent pay you for the insertion of his letter?*"

"S-i-r!" ejaculated Scissleby horrified in all his lengthy limbs at the idea of the Daily Copper being a purchasable commodity.

"In other words," continued the Unknown, "*how much did the Husband pay you for destroying his wife?*"

"Sir! You—you—" faltered Scissleby.

"Do you know that letter sir?" said the young man, with a bland voice as he drew the Package from his bosom, and took a single neatly folded paper from its centre: "Well written—a good hand—eh? And a *good name* at the bottom?"

The Sub-Editor's legs dropped from the chair—his face elongated with ludicrous dismay.

"Where did you get *that*!" he cried, fairly thrown off his guard.

"I have it. That is enough. It bears the mark of your paper written in a bold hand—yes the very print of the compositor's fingers.

And that letter cost the life of a Sister—'tis worth a Corpse—eh? A valuable letter—don't you think so?"

Scissleby was dumb. Twisting his face into a terrible kind of net-work, he was endeavoring to discover, in his own mind, how the young man had obtained the manuscript which had been sent to the Daily Copper sixteen months before.

"Queer!" he muttered. "Odd! Very. Who has he bought, I wonder?"

"Could I obtain a moment's conversation with one of your Proprietors?" asked the Unknown, as his face was subdued by a placid smile—"I wish to talk with them—not about this trifling matter—but in relation to a little copper speculation, which is unknown to any one in the west save myself."

These words filled Slinkum with a world of doubts and hopes:

"One of the Publishers—there's seven of 'em—may be found to-night at—" he named the place which had been designated on the card of Bung, the Dry Goods Man.

"Very well," said the Unknown, "that will do. I may call down at your office in the morning. Good evening Mr. Slinkum Scissleby."

Thus terminated the interview between the Unknown and the Sub-Editor of the Daily Copper.

Now our footsteps lie toward the Church of St. Simon's, where the Unknown is gazing

into the faces of the Popular Preacher—yet hold—

We first must dive into the recesses of Bonus Court, and behold a series of incidents that took place during the time which elapsed from the moment when the Unknown left the drinking party, until the instant of his departure from his own room, No. 92, at the great Hotel. The reader will do well to bear this fact of time, vividly in mind. Between the hours of seven and nine o'clock, then, and of course before the Unknown entered St. Simon's, the scenes which follow took place in Bonus Court. Bonus Court? A queer name—aye, and tenanted by queer people.

CHAPTER EIGHTH.

BONUS COURT. THE FIRST SCENE.

"You see the old woman is dyin' and she keeps mumblin' about somebody to pray with her," said a voice which was heard distinctly above the moaning of the winter wind: "I heer'd your father was a kind of a Preacher, an' I thought he might'nt object to say a prayer or two. But you must'nt think we can pay him for it. We're as poor as Job's turkies; we are."

The speaker was a boy of nineteen years, dressed in a round-jacket and trousers of coarse cloth, which exhibited, by the candle-light, the marks of much wear and rough usage. He was rather above than below the middle height, his form displaying decided indications of muscular power, in the broad chest and bony hands. A cap of dingy cloth, drawn over his eyes, concealed the upper part of his face, while the candle-light shone fully over his strongly marked jaw, wide mouth, and uncovered throat. He was standing on the threshold of a narrow door, whose posts supplied the place of a frame for a very impressive picture. A young woman, attired in a dress of faded muslin, with a shawl thrown loosely over her prominent breast, was standing there, lifting a candle above her head with one hand, while the other grasped the knob of the door. You would not have called her face beautiful; it was so deathly pale, but the very palor gava a new charm to her eyes, and her white forehead, which was relieved by soft brown hair. The eyes were large, and very

bright, but while the glaring light illumines her face, you cannot distinguish their color.

The wind howls dismally through the narrow Court, as the boy stands on the step, awaiting an answer from the young girl's lips. Yonder, far through this dreary avenue, where it joins the street, a gas lamp is faintly glimmering, but here, where the speaker and the listener are standing, a thick darkness prevails, scarcely broken by the light which flares above the face of the young girl. The moon is shining in the clear heaven, but her rays do not penetrate the gloom of the Court.

"Your mother is dying?" asked the young girl, shading her eyes with her hand, as she gazed steadily—and with something like sympathy in her eyes—upon the rude form which stood upon the wooden step below her.

The sound of her voice seemed to touch the callous feelings of the listener.

"Dyin'—to be sure she is," he blurted out, pulling his cap over his eyes—"I left her alone—she'll be dead I reckon afore I get back."

Was it a tear that trickled down his begrimed cheek?

"I am very sorry—" said the young girl with a kind of absent look, "very sorry that my father is not at home. How far do you live from here?"

"Live? Don't live at all! We 'hold out' in this here very Court—Number Two—up three pair o' stairs and old Bonus as owns the court warned us out a month ago to-morrow. Guess you know old Bonus, don't ye? Wears fair-top boots and a broad-rim; an' comes afore breakfus' for his rent?"

"I know Israel Bonus," said the young girl, smiling; "He owns this Court. But your mother—can I do anything to aid her? I expect my father home every minute, but she may die before he returns, If I could be of any service——"

She hesitated. The boy rubbed his bony knuckles over his face, and hung his head.

"Do anythin'—" he muttered, "She's past doin' fur. She is. And I spose you're as poor as we ar'?" he continued looking up into the thoughtful face of the girl.

"Wait a moment, and I'll get my bonnet," was the only answer which the young woman

returned. With these words she disappeared and closed the door, leaving the boy in the dark and cold.

"Perlite," he muttered, "But I spose she means well. What kin she do. It's cold, and that's a fact. I pities the little niggers as has to go out sweepin' chimnies this kind o' weather. Very poor people is little niggers" he added with a sound that could not be properly described as a laugh, for there was too much of bitterness in his voice for that—"Wonder when Fanny will come? A purty girl she is to go and leave her mother to die—though I'm a cussed wretch for sayin' it. Has not Fanny kep' us all this six weeks, and with her needle by——"

He added a very profane oath, which we have no desire to copy, lest we might offend those good people who never swear, but who merely raise their rents, when the winter bites hard and sharp at the doors of poverty.

"Wonder why she don't come, this here Preacher's daughter?" soliloquized the boy as he stood rubbing his hands together in order to preserve the circulation of the blood, for but thinly clad, he was keenly sensible to the cold. "Hello? Who's that out yonder, under the gas lamp? A gal and a man talking together—she turns her face this way! It's Fanny's hood—and by——its Fanny's face too."

Without another moment for thought, the boy crept cautiously along the Court until he stood in the shadows on the very verge of the street, where the moon was dimly shining over a waste of snow. Not ten paces from his position stood the lamp, its light glimmering through the shadows, which lay upon the side of the street, that was unenlivened by the moonlight.

The boy crept closer to the wall, and listened to the conversation of the persons who were standing beneath the lamp. One was a girl poorly clad, with a hood drawn over her face, and a bundle under her arm; the other a man whose form was encircled by the folds of a Spanish mantle, while a glazed cap shaded his visage.

"Come sis," he said, in a very thick voice—such a voice in fact as gives you an involuntary reminiscence of champagne and cigars—"There's no use of your denyin' it my

gail! You live somewhere hereabouts; I know it, for I've followed you here a dozen times. Come—your poor—maybe want a little money—”

“Leave me, leave me”—the voice of the girl trembled as she spoke—“I do not live here—that is—” she paused abruptly and sprang away from the lamp-post, when the cloaked individual rudely delayed her flight by laying his hand on her arm.

“Come, come, my little bird o' Paradise, there's no use o' your tryin' to get off in that way. I'm rich—I am—can set you up in a style o' splendour. Pshaw! I know you. Have I not tracked you from the tailor store near Third and Chesnut?”

As the girl struggled in his grasp, the boy—protected by the shadows, with his heart beating rudely under his ragged jacket—began to clench his hands, listening all the while, with an intensity that set his teeth and lips together.

“Let me go,” cried the girl—had she been a real heroine of a tragedy or a novel, she would have said Unhand me, villain! But as it is, we are bound to record the fact that she merely said, “Let me go!” and tried to release her arm from the gentleman's grasp.

The boy did not stir.

“I'll tell you what it is,” cried the gentleman, “There's no use of a young lady in your situation being particularly nice, and I'll be ———” he swore like a real gentleman—“if I'm a-goin' to be trifled with any longer. I like your face, and you can make a good friend out of me if you choose.”

“For God's sake let me go,” again cried the girl, struggling violently—“While you delay me, there is one waiting for me—”

“Don't doubt it, don't doubt it,” laughed the voice within the Spanish mantle, as its owner grasped the girl's wrist with one hand, and at the same moment flung his other arm around her waist. “Somebody waitin' for you—eh, honey? I knew it; you're one of 'em—aint you?”

The girl was powerless in the gentleman's grasp; her bundle fell upon the ice-covered pavement, and her shawl, torn from her shoulders in the struggle, was trodden beneath her feet.

Again she cried, in a voice which might have been heard above the roaring of the wind,

“For God's sake let me go!” and again she was answered by the gentleman's good-humored laughter.

At this crisis, however, the Boy sprang noiselessly from the shadows, and tapped the gentleman's glazed cap with his hand. When we remember that his hand was clenched, and that the tap was administered with a sincere good-will, we will be prepared to understand why it was that the gentleman released his hold of the girl, and reeled to and fro—from cellar-door to gutter—like a thoroughly drunken man.

“Who are *you*?” exclaimed the gentleman at last, steadying himself against the lamp-post—

Before him rose that distinct image of a rather muscular youth, clad in a ragged jacket and trowsers, with his wrists peeping from his sleeves, and his cap drawn over his eyes.

“Get in the house, Fanny—get o-u-t, I say,” grumbled the young man, and the form of the young girl was presently seen hurrying along the Court. “You want to know who I am, do you?” exclaimed the Boy, turning toward the gentleman, “I kin tell you in short order. (Clear out, Fanny; I'll be there directly.) I was bound 'prentice by the name o' Ralph Jones, but the boys calls me Jonesey the B'iler, 'cause I runs with the 'Fairy,' and am high on a bust. There's my card—”

With the last word he placed his fist very neatly in the centre of the gentleman's face, at the same time applying his torn shoe, with his foot in it, to the gentleman's legs. As a matter of course the gentleman sprawled on the pavement. As he fell, his cap was torn from his head, his cloak went sailing grandly over the street, and we discover in the prostrate individual who struggles on the ice-covered bricks, our old friend, Mr. Richard Bung, Dry Goods Merchant, and Man-about-town.

It was a terrible thing to witness the punishment which the uncouth Boy, calling himself Jonesey the B'iler, administered to the elegant and fashionable Bung.

“If I was a mind to, I could raise the boys on you—they're at the Injine House, and that's not fur off—but as it is, I think I'll maul you some meself. My name is Jonesey,” he continued, dropping on Bung's shoulder as he attempted to rise. “And them's my fists as is

playin' Julius Cee-sur about your eyes. Sass my sister, did you?"

It was we say a terrible thing to see the commentary which B'ler with his fists made on the face of Bung. There he struggled, green coat, red vest, blue cravat and all, rolling over the pavement, slipping in the icy gutter, while the Boy, like the Demon of a melo-drama, mounted on a demon-horse, kept his hold and solved the problem of perpetual motion with his fists and boots, all over the face and form of Bung.

Bung swore bitterly, and made creditable efforts to get on his feet again, saying something between whiles about the — Law.

"Sass my sister, did ye?" cried Ralph as he shook the Dry Goods Man as you would shake a coat that has been hanging for a long while in a dusty closet; "and talk of Law — do you? There's law — and there's law — and there's law!"

Every time he repeated the word, his fist descended upon some part of Bung's handsome visage, now skirmishing about the cheeks, now mounting to the forehead, and last of all, thundering upon the Roman nose.

"Let me up," screamed Bung, as the blood from his tortured proboscis streamed over his blue cravat — "Don't crowd a feller when he's down — don't —"

But ere the last word had passed his lips the hand was taken from his cravat, the fist had ceased its perpetual motion, and Bung struggling slowly into an erect position, looked around with eyes like saucers. The Boy had disappeared. Very much disheartened, and sore in every nerve, his green coat covered with a something that was not snow, and was not mud but seemed like a composition of both, Bung with many curses began to gather up his cap and cloak, which were scattered over a great expanse of street and pavement.

Then Bung looked up the street and down, but could not gain a glimpse of the form of his enemy. He gazed into the Court but all was dark and silent there. In truth the Boy had vanished like an Apparition.

"If I ever" — growled Bung as he wound his mantle about his shattered frame, and wiped the blood from his face with a "linen cambric" which he had bought at his own store — "If I ever —"

The sentence was not completed, for drawing his cap over his eyes, Bung went down the street — keeping in the shadow of the houses, and as far from the moonlight as possible — and muttering low words between his teeth, as the brass heels of his boots made a kind of intermittent music on the pavement.

When Ralph released his hold of the Dry Goods man, he darted into the shadows of the Court, as though animated by a sudden thought.

"Wonder what's become o' th' Preacher's gal? Guess she's forgot all about us," he stood for a moment gazing through the gloom of Bonus Court, and then plunged through the doorway of a house which stood near the public street.

All is very still and breathless now in Bonus Court. The place at all times has an air of desolation. The houses, it is true, are very new, so far as brick and plaster are concerned, but this miserable nook of dwellings, erected on a scanty piece of ground, which is hidden away among large edifices, and blocked in on every side — save that which opens on the street — by solid walls — seems very aged, at least with rage and want and hopeless wretchedness.

Three lights above, glimmering from narrow windows, break the thick gloom, with faint and wondering rays.

One shines from the home of the Millerite Preacher, where Ralph stood a few moments past begging for somebody to pray with a dying woman.

The other gleams from a second story window — gleams perchance upon a comfortable group of family joy — or it may be, upon a scene of wretchedness or death.

The other — and the last of all — you can see it over your head, flickering from the third story of the second house in Bonus Court.

CHAPTER NINTH.

BONUS COURT. A LEAF FROM ITS HISTORY.

Bonus Court?

Let me give you a leaf from the History of Bonus Court. It is written in the Chronicles of conveyancing; you may find it beside the record of the last Mortgage; it is inscribed perchance, in the same page that bears the epi-

taph of a broken heart. This, then, is the page from the history of Bonus Court.

Last summer there was a respectable gentleman, who went about town with fair top-boots and a broad-rimmed hat, and a large stick with an enormous head of some white bone or other. He was a Conveyancer, or rather a man of Property, for there was nothing that he would not make an honest penny by, from shaving a note at twenty-five per cent. up to selling the bed from under a dying man, and tossing his wife and children into the streets.

This gentleman — whose person we may behold after a while — owned a piece of ground just large enough for the erection of a comfortable two-storied dwelling.

But did he build a two-storied house on his lot of ground, and rent it to some quiet family for the paltry sum of one hundred and twenty dollars? Not he. He knew a trick worth two of that. For he was an exceedingly shrewd man; there was wisdom in every wrinkle of his fair top-boots, and a world of money-making in his bone-headed cane, or in the way that he carried it, when passing along Third street in full sail, his nostrils expanding as he scented a Mortgage in the wind.

So, locking himself up in his office, this grave gentleman sat for an hour with his fingers on his double chin — as you see in the portraits of Franklin — and concluded his meditation by the single word, Bonus! pronounced with all the emphasis of his wholesome lungs. He had resolved to build ten houses, where there was only room for one. Instead of a paltry hundred and twenty dollars in the way of rent, he would receive at least ten times sixty dollars, making a total of six hundred dollars.

But how should he build these ten houses, without drawing upon his bank account? "Bonus" was the magic word that solved this problem. Taking up his broad-rimmed hat, and brandishing his cane, the grave gentleman sallied forth, and even his fair top-boots terminated their journey at a carpenter shop, where a hardy young man was industriously working.

"Buy this lot of ground of me, and I will advance thee six hundred dollars to aid thee in building ten houses for thyself."

But the young carpenter had no money — no wealth but the strength of his arms, the blessing of God, and the smiles of a young wife and a little child.

"Never thee mind. I'll let thee have the ground on credit — a twelve months' credit if thee pleases — and thee can give me a mortgage on the lot until it is paid."

He was a very seducing gentleman; there was persuasion in his double chin; witchcraft in every toss of his cane.

The young carpenter consented. With the six hundred dollars he began to build the ten houses. The cellars were dug, bricks, stone and lumber brought — for the credit of the mechanic was very good — and after working for the days and nights of three months, the carpenter saw his Court rise into palpable shape; yes, the brick walls were almost ready to receive their roof. True, he was behind hand a little; he owed this man for lumber, that for bricks, another for mason work, a fourth for shingles, "but," said he to his young wife, "the houses will soon be done, and we will live very comfortably in one of them, while we receive five hundred and forty dollars rent for the others."

'Twas a glorious prospect. The carpenter kissed his wife and did not forget the baby, and next day went to work with a lighter heart, paying his "hands" out of the last remnant of the six hundred dollars. *

Soon, however, his labours were brought to a close, by a singular circumstance. The lumber-man presented his bill. So did the brickmaker, and the shingle-man, and the hardware-man. Everybody seemed to be infected by the same mania, for everybody brought in their bill.

And worst of all, Saturday night came, and no money to pay the hands. Masons, carpenters and hod-carriers, all went home without a penny, after their week's work.

Our young carpenter, standing towards dusk, in the centre of the unfinished "Court," with a saw in one hand, and a bundle of bills in the other, looked very black and desolate. Another week — two weeks at the farthest — and he might finish the houses, and rent or sell them, and pay all claims, from "Bonus" and his mortgage, up to the hod-carrier.

In this extremity he applied to the grave Conveyancer who had loaned him the money, and asked for a further loan—or, at least—for the services of the good gentleman, in securing two weeks' delay from the claims of all the carpenter's creditors.

"Thee is foolish to think it," was the answer. "Thee has begun with thee eyes open. Thee must finish."

And the young Carpenter did "finish," or rather the Sheriff finished for him, for next week there was a tempting display of hand-bills all over the unfinished houses, and the week after they were sold under the hammer. To whom, and for whose benefit? They sold for sixteen hundred dollars. The claim of the mortgage, of course, took precedence of all other claims, and the grave old gentleman killed two fine birds with one stone. He bought the houses by paying six hundred dollars, and at the same time, obtained for the delight of his own pocket, the six hundred dollars which he had loaned. What the lumber-man, the brick-maker and the hod-carrier received, is not recorded, but certain it is that the grave gentleman finished the houses for a very moderate sum, exclaiming oftentimes:

"Never was a row of houses so cheaply built. Out of nothing I have honestly made a very pretty Property, which is worth the interest of ten thousand dollars. Bonus is a good thing."

What became of the young carpenter? Bankrupt and disgraced, his self-respect gone, and his home made a hell, by the thoughts of his days and nights of worse than useless labor, the young carpenter resorted to the Bottle, and drank deeper every day, while the grave gentleman was finishing the ten houses of Bonus Court.

This Court, which looks so gloomy now, while the moon is shining yonder on the public street, is tenanted by at least twenty families, who live in one room on a floor—rooms with chimneys that do nothing but smoke, and ceilings that are good for nothing but to leak and crack—rooms, in short, that are good for nothing but good for very little else.

In yonder house the Millerite dwells: a little farther on, where a dim light glows, a man is starving to death, and right

on the third story, the mother of Ralph is dying.

An interesting place is Bonus Court, and a good gentleman is the owner thereof. Let us at once ascend into the third story and look upon the scene which awaits us there.

CHAPTER TENTH.

BONUS COURT. SCENE THE SECOND.

Up two pair of stairs, into the third story, where a tallow candle, burning fast toward the socket, reveals an interesting scene. The room—the only room in the third story—has two windows, one looking out into the court, and the other affording a view of a yard about ten feet square, and a blank wall, whose dreary bricks rising above the roofs of the Court, fill its chambers with half-twilight even at noon-day. The furniture of the room is very simple. A chair with three legs, a table of unpainted pine, on which the light is placed, a bed with a ragged coverlet, and a small sheet-iron stove, without a spark of fire.

Resting one hand upon the table, the young girl whom we beheld some few moments since in the street, gazes steadily from the shadow of her hood, upon the wretched bed. The place is very cold and damp, and you can see the tremor which agitates her limbs. Although you cannot look upon her face, the whiteness of her neck and hands seem to accord but illy with her dress, whose every fold speaks of poverty and endurance.

And as she looks upon the bed, her bosom swells and falls, even beneath the poverty-stricken dress, and a sigh disturbs the dead stillness.

"Mother!" she whispers—but there is no answer. The occupant of the bed, whose form you may dimly trace beneath the folds of the coverlet, is asleep. The young girl crosses

precious contents—four sticks of oak wood, mingled with a piece or two of lath. That is all.

"They were bought with the last penny," murmurs the girl, as she proceeds to build a fire in the sheet-iron stove—"But where bread for us, or medicine for my mother, are to come from, God alone can tell."

She has built the fire; and a ruddy light streams from the mouth of the little stove. The candle is by her side as she crouches on the floor, spreading forth her hands to catch the sudden warmth. Thus, you will observe, her form alone is illuminated, while all the rest of the narrow room is wrapped in twilight. And the ray of the candle, mingling with the light from the stove, steal beneath her faded hood, and give us a glimpse of her face.

It is a young face, which we can but imperfectly describe. There were eyes dark and lustrous, glimmering between half closed lids, whose long fringes only increased their brightness. There were lips, red and pouting, as with the warmth of maidenhood, and cheeks pale as marble or death, yet with a single glimpse of color glowing from the very centre of their pallour. Eyebrows too, distinctly lined, and black as the hair, which lay in glossy masses beneath the hood, and around the white forehead. Altogether, that young face, encircled by the hood and the black hair, wins you with its dazzling loveliness—loveliness which even poverty has not completely chilled.

She is kneeling there, and spreading her hands in the light of the sheet-iron stove, while her lip begins to quiver, and her eyes, brightening every instant, suddenly flash with tears.

"Why not?" she says, in a low voice—"Why not? I am no better than anybody else, and it is very hard to support oneself and a sick mother, on sixteen cents a day. It is indeed."

We cannot guess the meaning of these words, but the face of the girl grows paler as she speaks them, and her bosom heaves and falls with a wilder motion.

You will observe once for all, that we have set out in our task with the intention to paint human beings. We have nothing to do with heroes or heroines. We have not time for that kind of thing. So much Reality lies along our path—Reality, vivid and appalling—Re-

ality as palpable as is the corpse whose very touch chills you from the hand to the heart—that we have no time and not much inclination for Fiction. The young girl is no heroine; only a poor weak woman, whose divinest instincts have been battling for some ten years or more—from very childhood—with the dread realities of poverty.

"Why not?" she murmurs once again—and from the very accent, you can gather a vast deal of meaning. In the very flame of the sheet-iron stove, her eye is drawing a picture of a most tempting future. No more cold, no more hunger, no more miserable attire; but a life of rich garments, luxurious rooms, and endless enjoyment.

You will bear in mind that the young girl has just expended the last Two Cents of the store of Sixteen, which she made yesterday, by working from daybreak until candle-light, on "a fashionable shirt."

So deeply is she absorbed in the train of thought which follows her muttered "Why not?" that she does not hear the stealthy opening of the door, nor heed the stealthier footstep.

It is Ralph who stands near her, in his miserable attire—stands with his finger on his lip—gazing in dumb wonder at his sister's face. The candle, flashing upward, reveals his visage, and gives it a sinister expression. The mouth is wide, the nose firm and aquiline, the forehead, more remarkable for its marked outline than for its height, is surmounted by masses of tangled hair, and the eyes have a vacant leaden glare, which imparts to the whole countenance an aspect of precocious misery—altogether that face, as the light flits over it, makes a dark and uncomfortable impression on your fancy.

And yet the rude fellow seems spell-bound by the singular expression of his sister's face.

"Fanny, don't you look that ar way, fur cuss me if it don't make my blood get cold all through my body. Don't—I say—don't!" he exclaims, sinking by her side, and taking one of her little hands in his bony fingers—"Keep a stout heart, Fan, and I'll get work to-morrow, or go an' drown'd meself. There now—"

While a rude sympathy pervades his harsh features, he keeps his sister's hands within his own, and continues:

"It's hard—I know it! Mother sick these seven weeks, and I doin' nothin' and you workin' your fingers into sticks for all of us. It's cussed hard—it is. But you know Fan, that I left my Boss six weeks to-morrow, 'cause he didn't give me nary money, wittles nor clothes, and since then—why since then—"

He stopped abruptly, rubbing his hand among the mazes of his tangled hair—"I don't know 'xactly what I have been doin' and what I haint. Worked a week in a printin' office where they pay boys half-price for doin' the work o' grown up men. But my fingers was too stiff fur that—besides I can't nary read nor write, which makes it bad. Don't it Fan? By Julius Cee-ser if you go on a-cryin' this here way, if I don't drown'd meself afore you can say Jack Robinson"—

Fanny's cheeks were bathed in tears. Grasping her brother's hand, she said in a very low voice—

"Never mind, Ralph. I've been thinking of something that will bring bread and shelter to all of us. You couldn't help it if there was no work to be had—could you?"

She looked into his face, with her eyes flashing through their tears.

"Yes, but I needn't a run so much with the Injine," muttered Ralph, adding with a glance toward the bed—"How's mother? Any better Fan?"

At this question, all the remaining firmness and self-possession of the girl, gave way.

"I haven't the heart to look in her face," she said—"Maybe she's asleep, and may be she's dead. If she's asleep, I am only afraid that she will awake too soon, and ask for bread and medicine, when we have none to give her. And if she's dead—and if she's dead"—a fit of sobbing choked the words.

Then we haint got money enough to bury her. That's it, Fan! Never you mind, I've got somethin' in my head too, as 'ill bring us lots of money."

He rose, went to the bed, and in a moment was back again, kneeling by Fanny's side.

"Sleep, Fan. There aint as much fever on her hand, as there was a while ago, when she asked me to go and git a Preacher."

Fanny did not reply, but gazed vacantly into the fire, while her brother looked with a kind of rugged interest into her face.

And silence prevailed in that home of poverty and disease, while they crouched together on the floor, the Sister looking into the fire, as a singular thought increased the brightness of her gaze, and the Brother gazing into her face, a purpose as singular, began to flash in his leaden eyes.

"Why not?" murmured Fanny, as if speaking to herself.

"An' to-morrow whether anybody's dead or alive, we'll all be pitched into the street," was the murmur of Ralph.

Look at the picture for yourselves, as silence gathers deeper over this desolate home. A boy hardened by years of suffering and a girl battling for the last time, with temptation, crouching together, before a miserable fire, while the low breathing of the dying mother is heard through the stillness. If it does you any good, cherish the thought that this picture is only imaginary—cherish the thought, and go to Church, and thank God that you are not as bad as other people—especially writers of Novels. But if there is one pulse of humanity, yet moving in your veins, go out into the City of Philadelphia, and survey thousand scenes like this; and ten thousand worse than this.

A footstep broke the stillness, and a mild face was gazing upon the Brother and Sister.

"The Millerite's daughter," ejaculated Ralph—"You ain't a-goin' to pray yourself, are you? Mother want's a rale Preacher, and no mistake—"

Fanny looked up, and saw the form of Hannah Marvin, and felt the sympathy which flowed from her eyes.

"My friends," she said, coming to the stove—"I cannot tell what delays my father, but—" she cast a glance around the desolate room; "Can I do anything for you? I—I—am poor like—like—" she hesitated—"like yourselves, but—"

Fanny rose and put forth her hand—

"Thank you," she said quietly, her eyes saying more than her words.

She placed the candle on the table, and in a moment, Ralph, Fanny and Hannah formed a circle about the stove. It was an interesting contrast—the pale mild features of the Millerite's daughter shaded by neatly parted brown hair, the younger and blooming face of Fanny, looking altogether lovely amid

her raven tresses—the hard visage of Ralph, with great masses of tangled hair, hiding his forehead, even to the eyes.

For a few moments they looked in silence into each other's faces.

"This is very good in you," said Fanny, "You're poor as we are, and yet you would help us if you could."

"Takes three to raise a muss, and four to make a crowd," muttered Ralph: "Wonders how many poor people it takes to make a poor-house?"

"Your mother has been sick very long?" said Hannah, still looking around the room—"I *do* wish that Father would come home! I left word on his slate, and the moment he arrives he will come up here."

"The Doctor told us this afternoon that there was no use of his coming any longer," said Fanny, surprised at the evident uneasiness of the Millerite's daughter.

"What's this? Hello! Do you always travel with your baggage with you?" cried Ralph, as he beheld a huge basket, standing on the floor, behind Hannah, with its contents, whatever they were, concealed by a check apron.

A blush stole over Hannah's pallid face.

"Why I thought—you know—" she hesitated—"that you might—" she came to a sudden pause, and ended by lifting the basket on the table, while Fanny and her brother stood spell-bound by surprise.

"There," cried the Millerite's daughter, "You may blame me if you please, but—" she uncovered the basket and burst into tears. Ralph uttered an oath, coupled with a rude ejaculation of joy, while Fanny drawing near the table, contemplated the contents of this mysterious basket.

"May God bless you, our only friend," said the poor girl solemnly, her heart beating wildly and her eyes filling with tears, when—

When a low knock resounded at the door.

"It's father!" cried Hannah. "I am so glad—"

"No it aint nayther," said Ralph, clenching his fists, "I know who it is, and on a Sunday night too, when the very devil hisself goes to sleep."

Who the visitor was will be made known,

after we have witnessed a scene which took place a few moments previous, in another room of the house.

CHAPTER ELEVENTH.

BONUS COURT. A SCENE ON THE FIRST FLOOR.

We will descend to the first floor.

A man dressed shabbily, and with a three days' beard on his face, was stretched at length before the embers of a fire, which glimmered from the hearth. There was no carpet on the floor; a rude couch stood in one corner, and beside it a solitary chair.

On the chair was seated a woman of some twenty-five years, who had wound a ragged quilt about her form, and gathering her babe under its folds, gazed in silence at the prostrate form of her husband. Her hair hung loosely on her shoulders, and on her pallid face the last extreme of poverty—the want of bread, of fire, of sleep—was painted but too vividly.

"Curse it, there goes the last cheer, and not a drop left in the bottle," growled the man, gazing gloomily into the embers, as he raised himself upon his elbows.

"If you'd only leave the bottle alone, John," said the wife, endeavoring to drown the faint cry of the babe—"I would not care if all the cheers in the world were burnt to pieces—no more I wouldn't. Nor if all the houses—h-u-s-h a-b-a-b-y—nor if all the houses was burned to death a'top o' th' cheers. An' the rum-shops, too, John, they would make a good fire, wouldn't they, with their owners inside o' 'em?"

"Come Nancy, don't twit upon facts," returned John, as he stirred the embers with the empty bottle; "I've got a touch of the *tremens* on me, girl, and that's enough without twittin on facts."

"I wish to Heaven," said the wife, rather spitefully "that all the bottles in the world, and all the liquor in 'em, and all the men as sells it, was at the Devil, for from the Devil they come, and to the Devil, them and all as meddles with 'em is sure to go. Sure to go," she repeated, rocking in her chair, as the cry of the boy drowned her voice.

"Did I *teck* liquor this time a year ago?" John raised himself with one hand and gazed

serely toward his wife; "S-a-y? This time a year ago did I tech the cursed stuff?"

The voice of the wife was milder when she replied —

"No you didn't, John — I'll give you justice there. A year ago our baby was just born, and we were living so comfortably in Poplar street — our home was small, but we had a house to ourselves — and every Saturday night you came home like a man and with your airmans in your hand —"

"Then I must set up shop for myself," interrupted John, as his large grey eyes, caught the glow of the fire "and then —"

The wife did not reply. Burying his face against the babe which nestled to her breast, she burst into tears.

John's chin began to quiver. He rubbed his hand over the tattered sleeve, which only half concealed the outline of his muscular arm, and then ran his fingers through his short brown hair, gazing all the while into the embers on the narrow hearth.

"Isr'el Bonus," he said to himself, "What a comfortable thing it would be to see you roastin' there — wouldn't it, Nancy?"

He burst into a fit of nervous laughter, which effectually silenced the sobbing of his wife and the moans of his child.

"Why John, thee is sitting idle here, when everybody else is gone to meeting. I am ashamed of thee, John."

"Isr'el Bonus," fairly shouted John, as he turned his head over his shoulder, and gazed at the intruder.

Yes, it was Israel Bonus, fair top boots, bone-headed cane, broad-rimmed hat and all. Beneath the broad-rim appear a ruddy face, all sprinkled over with smiles, and under the double chin, glared a white cravat, which flowered into ruffles over his capacious chest. Israel Bonus may have been forty years of age, and he may have been sixty; at all events he was exceedingly well-preserved; from his small eyes, hidden in wrinkles, down to the wrinkles of his top-boot, there was an air of jocund good humor about the man. He stood in the open doorway, applying his heavy cane to his nose, while his double chin kept wagging like a

saucer of "floating island," a condiment well known to confectioners and small evening parties. A suit of drab, with spacious pockets, clothed Israel's somewhat bulky form, and his enemies — every good man has enemies — were wont to murmur certain ridiculous words about a Wolf of Traffic being hidden under the sheep's clothing of William Penn. At what meeting he worshipped we cannot say, but know for a verity, that his creed was Orthodox, and that he held in equal contempt tenants who could not pay their rent, and Infidels who went about talking of the miseries of the Poor.

Horse-racing, gambling, going to theatres — none of these vices belonged to him. Much less could he be charged with the sin of encouraging idleness by giving a stray copper to the vagrants along the street; he was free from any such gross wickedness. People spoke of certain singular matters which transpired at his bachelor home, where he was continually changing his housekeepers, and getting new ones; but People tell falsehoods, and Israel Bonus was a just man. Rumors there also were about a Big Bottle, which stood on his side-board, and which often consoled the good man after a hard day's work in Mortgages or an unusual stress of Sheriff's sales. But the Bottle only contained a weak mixture of rum and water for his rheumatism; he was afflicted often with the rheumatism, was the good Israel Bonus.

"Thee is a pretty fellow, to be idling in thee home, when every body is gone to meeting," said Israel — who, by the bye, used the word "thee" in all places, and with a refreshing contempt for Lindley Murray.

"Isr'el," said John, in a very meaning way, as he looked over his shoulder at the good Bonus, "It's Sunday night, but how'd you like to make an honest penny?"

Israel's small eyes twinkled amid their wrinkles, and drawing near, he laid the head of his cane against his nose, exclaiming in a whisper —

"W-e-l-l! How thee does talk, John Cattermill — a penny did thee say? How?"

John then commenced a narrative, which the good Bonus listened to, with all his ears and soul.

CHAPTER TWELFTH.

THE DRUNKARD'S STORY.

But the narrative was prefaced by a somewhat vague and rambling conversation. John was full of a great secret—Israel could see that with a glance, but John was not disposed to unburden himself without a little persuasion. "You have come for your rent, I 'spose?" said John. "Odd time to collect rent—hey? Sunday night, Isr'el I thought you was a better Quaker than that comes to."

"Thee is mistaken. I never collect my rents on First Day evening," said Israel, "But since thee has spoken of it, I must call to mind the fact that thee is in a month's arrears. As for the Widow Jones, who occupies the upper part of the house, she must be gone by nine o'clock to-morrow. She must. It is terrible, this way some tenants have of robbing a kind and unsuspecting Landlord. Two months she owes me—just ten dollars. Ten dollars is a great deal of money, John Cattermill."

Israel looked around for a chair, but being unable to find one, for the very good reason that the next to the last of six was burning on the hearth, while the wife, Nancy, occupied the very last, Israel quietly assumed a position near the fire, gazing with peculiar interest upon the prostrate Drunkard.

"Ten dollars is a good deal of money," murmured John, shutting his eyes in a dreamy way, "But six hundred dollars is a good deal more—aint it, Nancy?"

"Yes, it is, John. (Do go to sleep, that's a dear, good, blessed, heavenly baby!) Israel ought to know that himself, for he bought this whole Court with six hundred dollars."

The good Israel arranged the ruffles on his chest, and said—"A very good bargain it was. Ah, John, John, if thee would only keep away from the bottle!"

It was a singular shadow which passed over the swollen and unshaven features of the prostrate man. Half closing his eyes, and looking vaguely into the fire, he supported his form on his elbow, and remained perfectly silent for a long pause, to the great chagrin of the good Bonus.

"Thee had a story to tell me? Thee had better be quick about it, John, for I've no time

to lose. I had it in my mind to tell thee that thee had better look out for a new residence, as I shall want this house for a friend, who is about moving from the country."

These words were delivered very briskly, by the good man, and with a rapid rising and falling of his voice, not to mention the emphatic movements of his cane.

"That is, you are a-goin' to pitch me into the street, in the dead-of winter? Me and my wife, and the baby?" said John, in a subdued voice.

"God help us!" was the low ejaculation of the wife, who clasped her hands over the form of her chilled babe, as she sat in the shadow, behind the good Quaker.

"Thee can easily get another house," said Israel. "Houses are very plenty. There is a number in the market," he continued, speaking in the language of trade.

"Isr'el, the Widow Jones, up stairs, is goin' to leave you to-night," said John.

"To-night! This looks like foul play, John."

"Foul play?" John asked, passing his brawny hand over the sleeve of his check shirt, and gaping terribly.

"Foul play—I repeat it. The Widow has obtained money by some means or other. She has property—property, John," he polished the side of his nose with the head of his cane, and shutting one eye, directed the other toward a spot in the ceiling. "I think that I remember her under another name, some years back. Tut! Tut! Truly she must pay me these ten dollars."

"She *has* property," whispered John, "and she is a-goin' to leave you to-night."

"She may leave me, but I will follow her. A summons or a landlord's warrant will bring her to her senses, at any time or place within thirty days."

Israel grew warm, while John, looking sleepily, with his face toward the fire, seemed occupied with some important secret.

"I'll tell you what it is, Isr'el, there's no use of a man of your character being swindled by a woman like this. I'll jist up and tell you all about it. She has money—six hundred dollars in gold—"

"In gold!" sighed Israel.

"In gold—hid away under her pillow. They're afraid you'll find it out, and so she's

shammin' sick, up stairs, while that big lubber of a boy, and that trollop of a gal, are makin' believe to weep and moan alongside her bed. They're all in the third story—"

Israel's eyes twinkled vividly, and his upper chin sank into the folds of the lower one, while his mouth was impressed with an expression quite oracular.

"In the third story? Hey? Six hundred dollars? Hum—hum. 'Tis a good deal of money for such poor folks. Let me see—let me see. I may obtain a situation for this boy, and the Mother and her daughter would make a couple of excellent housekeepers for me. Then, the six hundred dollars might be invested in my hands, to their advantage. Thee knows, John, that we were put into the world for a wise purpose—to do good to one another? Hey?"

Certainly it was a pleasure to remark the benevolent look of Israel's honest face. Picture that face, with the eyebrows elevated until only a single wrinkle is left to mark the place of the forehead, the small eyes buried amid the lids; the lips pressed together, and the upper chin quite hidden in the folds of the lower one. 'Twas a very oracular face, although different from the swollen and sleepy face of the Drunkard.

"I know'd you were a good man," said John, in a coaxing tone, "Didn't I always say so. Nancy? Now, you need not be under any trouble about the Widow's leavin' you to-night, for even if she does get away, I know where she's goin'. Out near Francisville—there's where she's goin'. Found it out to-day, Aint she, Nancy?"

Looking over the Quaker's shoulder, John caught the eye of his wife, making a strange grimace, which Israel did not see.

"Why—John"—the wife began, in a tone of extreme wonder, but a glimpse of the face of her husband, reddened by a sudden glow from the fire, arrested her words: "Of course she is—going to move out into a place near Francisville," she added meekly.

"But she must not go. I will see her forthwith. Up in the third story did you say?" cried Israel in a brisk tone—"Hum—hum! I can easily satisfy myself of the truth of your story, John—very easily!"

"How?" asked the drunkard.

"By putting one hand under her pillow, while I examine the state of her pulse by applying my other hand to her wrist. Does thee understand?"

"But will this rowdy—I mean Ralph who runs with the injines, let you?"

"Poh—poh! Do I not feel an interest in the family? I will persuade him—I will persuade him—"

Grasping his cane by the middle, Israel made his way, without an instant's delay, to the door which led into the upper stories. It was in the shadows of the room, near the place where the wife was seated, but Israel passed her without a word, opened the door of the stairway, and presently his footsteps were heard on the stairs.

Rising from her chair, Nancy crossed the room, and approached her husband, her pallid face manifesting a mingled wonder and anxiety as she said—

"Why John! How could you! To make me tell such a barefaced falsehood!"

"She is a-goin' to move out to Francisville," answered the husband, as a queer smile played over his face—"By jing, Nancy, but you are too stupid!"

"Francisville! Where will she get a house near Francisville?"

"Don't you know, my girl, that not fur off from Francisville, there is a very 'rural situation' as the Auctioneers say, called—*Potter's Field?*"

The wife did not answer with a word. An idea seemed to flash over her brain and deprive her of the power of speech. She became paler, even as she swept aside the dishevelled hair, which straggled along her cheeks, and she looked upon her drunkard-husband with a wild and frightened stare.

John all the while shook with a fit of suppressed laughter.

"Good idea—ain't it, Nance? Isr'el will feel her wrist, and——" he laughed all over his face, making desperate efforts at the same time, to restrain his mysterious merriment.

"John," whispered the wife—"Israel is a bad man. He has made you what you are. I know it, John. Yet still this scheme of your's is too horrible—it is unchristian—"

But John put his thumb to his nose, and described imaginary figures in the air, with the

outspreed fingers, laughing to himself meanwhile, from his eyes to the soles of his boots.

CHAPTER THIRTEENTH.

FANNY, RALPH AND ISRAEL.

Once more we will ascend to the third story.

"On a Sunday night," growled Ralph, as the knock was heard at the door—"Stand aside g-a-ls and let me settle him. Come in!"

While Fanny and Hannah stood wondering, the door was opened, and Israel Bonus entered, his face smiling in every wrinkle, while his double-chin was agitated by a kind of perpetual motion. Still grasping the cane by the middle, he came into the room with a peculiar see-saw motion, and with a rapid glance surveyed the details of the scene. The face of Ralph, who confronted him with clenched hands, and sullen eyes—the mild visage of Hannah—the beautiful countenance of Fanny—the bed whose coverlet concealed the form of the dying woman—the basket on the table, and the little stove which was roaring away in one corner—not a single detail of the scene, escaped the quick glance of Israel Bonus.

"Ralph, my fine fellow, how does thee do? Thee must have a better jacket, boy, to keep out the winter's cold. Fanny, my dear child"—he chuckled the young girl under the chin, and patted her velvet cheek—"So thee poor mother is sick, very, very sick. Ah, Hannah, is thee here too—how does thee father come on? Rent due to-morrow—thee knows? What, a basket of good things, cold ham, a sausage, a loaf of bread, and a piece of turkey! A gift from some friend in the country—hey? And how does thee get along, Fanny, nursin' thee poor sick mother?"

Had the floor opened, and one of the Genii of the Arabian Nights poked his head through the aperture, the occupants of the room could not have manifested a deeper surprise, than was at this moment impressed upon their faces, as they beheld Israel Bonus see-saw-ing about the place, glancing with his sharp eyes into every corner, and greeting every one in his gruff voice with a good-humored word.

"May I be knock'd into the middle of next week, if I can take you, old codger," said the irreverent Ralph—"What do you mean by

pitchin' on upon us, in this style, an' smilin' an' grinnin' like a basket o' chips?"

"Hush!" whispered Fanny, laying her little hand upon her brother's clenched fist—"He means us good—hush, brother."

"And how would thee like to come and be my housekeeper—that is when thee Mother gets well?" cried Israel, as he planted himself before the young girl, rubbing his nose with his cane, as he tapped her cheek, and pinched her chin—"Thee is a good girl—and thee and thee Mother can live with me, and keep house for me, and we will make a nice family—won't we, my good child?"

Had the honest Bonus solicited Fanny to accompany him in a pleasure trip to China, in an air balloon, she would undoubtedly have been taken by surprise; but this proposition, so smilingly made by the fatherly Israel, was some leagues ahead of China and air balloons, both as regards novelty and astonishment.

Fanny was dumb.

Ralph looked as though a Paixhan cannon had burst within hearing—he was, if we may use a bold expression, appalled by the coolness of Israel Bonus.

Meanwhile Hannah, whose pallid face manifested a sort of ludicrous perplexity, commenced removing the contents of the well-laden basket, looking from one face to another, in pure and unmingled amazement.

"I say—I s-a-y, old Bonus, but you go ahead of the injine, this time you do. You kin take the horn, you kin," cried Ralph, borrowing a bold metaphor from the natural history of an Engine Company—"You burn my time, and lay me flat—you do—or my name is *not* Jonesey the B'iler!"

And Ralph surveyed the broad-brim, bone-headed cane, fair-top boots and double-chin, as a stranger from the interior, visiting the city for the first time would examine the skeleton of the Mermaid, so carefully preserved among the curiosities of Peale's Museum.

"That's the reason I'm here this evening," smiled Bonus, as he playfully attempted to take Fanny's hand—"We old folks are rather queer in our notions. Now I've taken a great liking to thee and thee family."

"Thank you, Sir—" faltered Fanny, making a courtesy in her confusion, "This is very

kind — "an' her face, beautiful even amid poverty and want, was lighted up by a perfect rosebud on each cheek, while her white teeth, began to glimpse out from her pouting lips.

"Ralph, what kind of work would thee like to do?"

And at the question, the ragged boy, was confronted by the kind Israel, who tapped him playfully on the shoulder, chuckling internally all the time. The contrast between the two, is worth a glance. Here Bonus, very respectable and imposing, arrayed in all the plenitude of drab, ruffles and fair-top boots, to say nothing of the cane which was as much a part of him as his arm — there, with matted hair, and dingy jacket and trowsers, the outcast 'prentice, whose scowling face, looked blacker and more repulsive, as the light shone upon the smiling visage of Israel, whose very wrinkles spoke of comfortable dinners, and fatness constantly increasing at the ratio of Compound Interest.

"What 'ud I like to do?" growled the B'iler — "I do no whether I'd like to put you out o' th' winder, or give you a h'ist down the stairs."

"Pooh, poh! Thee is butting thee head against thee bread and butter. What kind of work would thee like to do, for good wages?"

A very insinuating man was Bonus. Ralph pulled awkwardly at his tangled hair, muttering — "Why ef you do mean a fellow a kindness, there's no denyin' but I'd like to get work, an' get paid for it, for this runnin' with the injine gets a fellow more bricks a-side o' his head than it puts coppers in his pocket. But I aint a-goin' to work for any man as —"

Ralph was arrested by a groan which resounded from beneath the tattered coverlet.

"Mother is waking from her sleep," said Fanny hastening to the bed, but she was gently thrust aside by Israel, who placed his cane under his arm, and thrust one hand beneath the coverlet, at the same time fumbling with the other about the pillow, which supported the sleeper's head. You will remember, that the face of the sick woman, was altogether concealed by the quilt; her black hair, streaked with grey, alone was visible.

"What ar' you 'bout?" said Ralph, remarking the action of Israel. "You aint a doctor, are you? Do you foller medicin' and mort-es together?"

Bonus turned his face to the ceiling, shutting his eyes and pursing his mouth, until he looked like a capital copy of an old-fashioned family doctor.

"Thee Mother's pulse is very languid — no! It is terribly rapid. It is —" and the hand under the pillow kept fumbling away, as if the pillow also had a pulse and a circulation.

CHAPTER FOURTEENH.

ISRAEL GETS THE GOLD.

Ralph advanced, and lifted the coverlet from the face of the sick woman.

And Bonus, disturbed in his medical reverie, dropped his eyes from the ceiling, and looked into the uncovered face of the woman.

These two paragraphs doubtless look very meaningless, and yet they describe an action which was followed by wonderful results.

For no sooner did the gaze of Israel rest upon the uncovered face, than his own face, so ruddy and well-preserved, assumed an unhealthy and chalky color. The hand of the sick woman slid from his stiffening fingers. He did not start backward, for he had not the power to move. His cane rattled to the floor. His lips gave utterance to a faint ejaculation. And his small eye — perhaps for the first time in his life — dilated from their wrinkled lids, until the white of each eyeball was visible.

And the sedate man of property, who made his pastime among Sheriff's sales, and hunted down a tenant, by way of relaxation, nqw shook from head to foot — shook in his ruffles, drab coat, broad rim — shook from his white cravat, down to his fair-tops.

"What's the matter, old hoss!" said Ralph, frightened by the very fright of the Conveyancer.

Israel did not answer, but stood gazing with lack-lustre eyes upon the face of the sleeper.

Fanny came to the bed, exclaiming, "Bless me, Mr. Bonus, how pale you are!" but still he had not a word. Hannah, too, who had never seen the face of the sick woman, drew nigh on tip-toe, and saw that face, and fell back with a shudder.

"Have mercy upon us," she cried, with uplifted eyes, and with the accent of involuntary prayer, "good Father, have mercy upon us!"

As for Israel, he remained in that statue-like position for at least two minutes, 'gazing alternately at the face of the sick woman, and at the hand which he had clasped. Then he looked at his own hand—the hand which had been in contact with the hand of the sleeper—and began to rub it, in an absent way, against the sleeve of his coat, trembling all the time, and white as chalk.

After a moment, he turned to the door with tottering steps, and left the room, leaving his cane upon the floor. Never in thirty years had Israel Bonus forgotten his cane. He did not close the door behind him, but made the best of his way down stairs, rubbing his hand against his sleeve, and muttering to himself.

And down stairs, with his head against the door, crouched John Cattermill, listening intently for the sound of Israel's steps, and holding back his wife, who wished to ascend to the third story, and warn Israel of his danger.

"Stand back, Nance, I say; you sha'nt go up, you sha'nt," he grumbled, as he held her back by the wrist. "He'll get more than he bargains for; I know that! Gold—gold—lots of it! Hush your noise, will you, an' keep that brat still, or I'll dash it through the winder! Hush! he's comin'—he's comin'—"

"John, you are not yourself," whispered the wife, in a tone whose instinctive horror is beyond the power of description, "let me go up stairs. Do, John—oh! you have hurt my wrist!"

The baby began to cry within the tattered covering which bound it to the mother's breast, and Nancy muttered, as she caught a glimpse of her husband's fiery eyes and distorted face, "It is the *delirious tremens*—" poor Nancy! her knowledge of words was not altogether perfect—"or, it's the manny-poker!"

These exclamations will no doubt provoke laughter, but had you seen the terrified face of the wife—or heard the accent in which she spoke—laughter would be the last thing in your thoughts. It was in some measure true; her husband exhausted and diseased by a boundless indulgence in poisons of various names, was now attacked by that fearful avenger of violated nature—the *delirium tremens*.

"He's comin', he's comin'," growled John, "and here he is!"

From the opened doorway, appeared Israel

Bonus, still rubbing his hand against his sleeve, his face still chalky white, his step irregular and tottering.

He did not speak, but endeavored to gain the door, leading into the street, without a moment's delay,

But John arrested his progress—seized him by the arm—and began a kind of mad dance before the face of the bewildered man.

"You wanted money, did you? Hello! You're pale, my old boy, you're pale—bah! you look like a corpse! Did you find the money?"—his voice dropped to a whisper, as he made a low bow—"Did you find it, I say?" his voice rose into an unearthly yell. "You're a nice Quaker, to go and sell a man out by the Sheriff, and mad him so, that he only lives, when he drinks fire and brimstone! Aint you now?" (*another bow!*) "You kin build your Court, and heap the poor into narrow rooms, and grind the blood out of their hearts, to make up your rent. You kin stow 'em away, in the damp and cold—and treat 'em worse than you would a mad dog. You're jist the man for that! Who keers how the poor man lives, so long as he pays his rent? You don't, I guess. Nobody does. Away with 'em all, the poor devils—let 'em live in a room, not big enough for a grave—don't let 'em have sunshine, or air, or comfort—they are poor. That's enough. But sometimes, Isr'el, these poor devils, livin' in dirt and damp, are swept off by a disease, that's born and bred in your very Court, among its filth and rottenness—you don't keer, do you? Who does? This pestilence takes wife, and children, and rots a livin' bein' afore death, so that his own mother wouldn't know him. Who keers? But, Isr'el, 'spose this disease gets hold o' th' one as planted it—get's hold o' you, and settles up old scores with you, and digs into your heart, as it has dug into the hearts of these miserable vagabones in. your Court—what then? 'Spose it's called Small-pox, the worst kind, too—black, and foul, and horrible—what then? Small-pox, I say—d'ye hear?" The wretched man, as he whispered and screamed and howled, kept his hold on the bewildered Israel, dancing and bowing before him, while he prevented him from reaching the front door.

Israel said never a word. He looked like a

man who has been overtaken by some overwhelming calamity. Still rubbing his hands, he tried to pass the raving man, while his face, yet white and apathetic in its very terror, received a kind of spectral radiance, now and then, from the embers on the hearth.

"Let him go, John, let him go," cried Nancy, seizing her husband's arm. "Don't you see that he is frightened to death?"

John, however, kept his hold, grinning until his set teeth were visible, between his distorted lips.

"Small-pox, Isr'el, small-pox! You hear me! The poor man's pestilence they call it—now it's yours! You can't get rid of it—it won't be shuk off—" he burst into a wild fit of laughter—"Now go! And the poor man's pestilence, go with you!"

Israel released from the grasp of the madman, went straight to the door, and disappeared without a word.

"Nance," said John with a grotesque grin, as he pulled his wife near the hearth—"Don't you remember last summer, how old Isr'el told us there was only one disease as he was afraid of? He'd never been waksinated—you mind, gal? And his high livin' and his wines, and his rich old Bonus blood, jist fits him for that disease, and *now he's got it.*"

Let us draw a veil over this scene.

The maddened drunkard sank down upon the hearth, like a beast on its haunches, and began to pitch the coals from the fire, tossing them from one hand to another, until they burn huge blisters on each palm, while his features distorted from all natural shape, caught glimpses of red light from the smouldering embers.

The poor wife stood gazing upon this miserable wreck—gazing without a tear—her eyes surrounded by a red circle, and her lips parched and blistered.

"There goes Bonus," whined the Drunkard fixing his lack-lustre eyes upon the fire—"see how he jumps! Mortgages at his heels, and Sheriff's sales around his neck—look! look! How they hunt him down, and choke him as he runs! And"—his voice sank—"did not he tell us last summer that it was the only disease he was afraid of?"

CHAPTER FIFTEENTH.

THE TWO REQUESTS OF THE DYING WOMAN.

Again we enter the room on the third story, and take up the scene, which was enacted in that miserable chamber, as Bonus was hurrying from the house.

"Why do you stand there, starin' like a stuck pig?" cried Ralph with a ruffianly scowl, as Hannah shrunk back from the sight of the sick woman's face—"Did you never see a sick woman afore? A purty Preacher's daughter you are to be sure!"

Fanny was by his side, whispering in his ear. "Ralph don't behave like a brute. Hannah has been very kind to us. And then you must remember that she never saw anything so bad as——" she could not say *as my mother's face*—"as *this* before."

Hannah mastering her fears—or rather that instinctive horror which impresses persons of a peculiar temperament at the sight of a loathsome and infectious disorder—drew near the bed, and gazed steadily, although shuddering, into the face of the sick woman.

Do not ask us to describe that face. It is encircled by dark hair, amid whose masses appear threads of silver, but we dare not picture that visage, on whose linaments Pestilence had set its loathsome seal. The hand too—it may have once been white and delicate, but now——

There are some sights which are beyond the compass of description. Before us, on this wretched bed, is stretched a miserable and wasted wreck of humanity. We dare not picture the features of the dying woman—let us draw a veil over that face. Well might Hannah start back appalled, and Hannah in her father's home, has seen every shape of disease and wretchedness, come begging to the Poor Preacher for relief.

While these spectators of the dying woman were grouped about the bed, a faint moan from those disfigured lips, pierced every heart with pity and with fear.

And then starting up in the bed, like a horrible embodiment of Poverty and Pestilence, the dying woman, flung her loosened hair back from her face, and the coverlet fell from her gaunt and wasted form. Once perchance she

was beautiful, but now, even Ralph, rude and callous as a life of hardship had made him, shrank back and turned his eyes away from the sight of his Mother's Face.

Fanny alone, brave with the instinct of moral courage, such as is oftentimes embodied in the most fragile forms—Fanny alone came to the bed—took the pestilence-stricken hand within her own, and whispered a word of hope in the ear of the dying one.

"Mother, I am here. Fanny—your child. Don't you know me?"

Around the whole room, from window to window, and from ceiling to floor, roved the strange, unnatural gaze of the Mother. It was very bright, that wandering look, but its brightness was of the charnel. This time Fanny hid her face in one hand, (the other still clinging to her Mother's) while her lips murmured faintly, "God have mercy upon us all!"

Hannah kneeling by the bed, was praying in a low voice, her mild eyes upturned, as with her hands clasped she framed those trembling syllables of supplication.

"Mother—who calls me Mother?" the voice of the dying woman now was heard, every accent thick and husky, yet strong with the very nerve of Death—"I have no right to the name. Go—go—bring me a Priest. I cannot die with *this*—*this*—upon my soul."

The emphasized words, were accompanied with a sullen look, and a hand pressed hard and sternly against her heart.

"Go, or my curse shall blight you forever," whispered the dying woman, "I know you Fanny—know that my time is short. I must speak with a Minister—you won't refuse me this request. Go!"

She flung the hand of her daughter from her, and fixed her maddened eye upon her face, with a look half imploring, half defiant.

"You had better obey your mother," whispered the Millerite's daughter, "You may find my father at St. Simon's. You can see him before Church begins. It is but a step from here, and—'tis strange that I have forgotten it until now—he told me that he would stop there on his way home."

Not another word was spoken. Winding her faded shawl about her shoulders, and placing her hood upon her dark hair, Fanny

cast one glance toward the face of her Mother, and hurried from the room.

Shall she ever behold that face in life again?

As for Ralph, cold, hungry and stricken with stupor, he sank down near the bed, placing his bony hands upon his knees, and fixing his eyes blankly upon the floor. He did not seem to have the power of speech or motion. And the eyes of the dying woman, wandering about the room, rested at last upon the ragged Outcast, who crouched near her bed, with the upper part of his face hidden by his matted hair.

"You are crying, Ralph—" there was something less of harshness in her voice—"Crying for me. Don't deny it. I see your tears. Don't you know that I've been your worst enemy?"

"I haint a cryin'—growled Ralph—"I'm jist a thinkin' how we've all scraped on together, and how that it 'ud be a cussed sight better if we would all kick the bucket together, and be done up in one coffin. That's all. You don't think old woman, I'm sich a spooney as to cry a-cause my Mother's a-dyin'—do you?"

And he hung his head, and the tears from his shadowed face dropped one by one upon his knee.

"Where's Fanny?" cried the Mother with a changed voice, as she looked vaguely at Hannah—"You aint Fanny. No you aint. You have not her purty black hair. Where's Fanny I say?"

She stretched forth her pestilence-smitten arm, and made a fierce gesture as though she was about to start from the bed, and spring at the throat of the frightened girl.

"She has gone for a Minister—" faltered Hannah.

"A Minister—ha, ha," cried the Mother. "What have I to do with your Ministers? A Priest, a real Priest—of the Church—of the Church—d'ye hear? Ralph, Ralph, I say—here—"

The son started up, alarmed by the quick tones of his mother's voice. She laid her hand upon his shoulder and whispered in his ear.

"A Catholic Priest," he muttered, "Yes, I'll go and be back in a minnit. I know where he lives."

The Mother followed him with her eye,

until he found his cap, and rested a gaze of unutterable yearning upon him, until his ragged form disappeared through the doorway.

Shall he ever behold that face in life again?

"He'll not be long, he'll not be long. *Then* I can die in peace. So much to say, so much to say, and—take away that curtain from the window. I can't see the sun any more. Go—go—a Priest I say—a real Priest, of the Church; the Church you mind! Do you think I'd tell a thing like that to any of your beggarly impostors?"

With incoherent sentences like these, uttered slowly and with painful distinctness, although in a very low voice, the wretched woman sank back in her pillow, picking at the tattered quilt with her wasted hands. Her memory soon wandered into the scenes of a long past day; she talked, she sang, she uttered frightful blasphemies. At last, in a voice low and tremulous, she uttered a broken prayer from the ritual of the Catholic Church—

"*Mea culpa! Mea maxima culpa!*" These words were often repeated—"Through my fault, through my most grievous fault!"

And in that dreary room, where a Soul was trembling in a body terribly changed by Pestilence—trembling ere it went forth into Eternity—Hannah on her knees, poured from the fountains of her heart, a simple, child-like prayer, whose accents ascended with the moans of the dying.

—It was now about eight o'clock—and at the moment, you will remember, when the Unknown is in his room, No. 92 at the great Hotel.—

"The poor woman is indeed very sick," said a voice remarkably mild and musical. Hannah raised her eye, and beheld the intruder, who had entered unperceived.

It was a Quaker woman, attired very neatly in the garb of the sect, and with extremely brilliant eyes, glancing from the shadow of her white bonnet. A Quaker woman of some forty years, or more, who carried a basket on her arm, and riveted the gaze of Hannah by the peculiar expression of her face. The forehead was bold—bold, almost to masculinity—the lips at once sad and winning in their smile, and the eyes, intensely black, shone with dazzling brightness under the arching brow. In a word, it was such a face as you might see only

for an instant, and yet wear in your memory for a life-time.

"Martha Lott!" cried Hannah, with something of distrust clouding her face. For in the Quaker woman she recognized a terrible Personage of whom she had heard a great deal—whose very name, in fact, was coupled with many scoffs and scorns, and uttered with a shudder by the Orthodox Friends. She was an Infidel—maybe an Atheist—her daily walks of life, it is true, defied, even sanctified scandal, but her belief, O! the belief of Martha Lott was terrible. It was even whispered she had said, that it was much better to feed the bodies of the Poor, before you attempted to save their souls.

And still, as she stood on the threshold, basket in hand, Hannah, the Millerite's daughter, was won in spite of herself, by the expression of that Quaker woman's face; and, trembling forward, she took that Infidel by the hand, saying at the same time, "God bless you, Martha Lott!"

Before we gaze upon the sequel of this scene, we must return to St. Simon's.

CHAPTER SIXTEENTH.

THE MOURNER'S BENCH.

The Unknown beheld at last the face of the Preacher.

Yet it was only after some moments that he could gather self-possession to look calmly upon that face, for the scene before his eyes confused and blinded him.

"It is like a dream," he muttered, and looked around the Church, whose galleries, and aisles, and windows were lined and packed with human faces. The air was dense and stifling. The lamps above the pulpit burned dimly, and the great chandelier hanging from the ceiling, afforded only a sort of twilight lustre. And the stillness, like the grave, was only broken by sighs and sobs, and low words, uttered with all the emphasis of despair.

From the door to the pulpit steps, the place was packed with human forms. Young and old, rich and poor, the fashionable and the rude laborer, the poor woman who sold vegetables in market, and the rich one who merely squandered her husband's money—all were there, presenting contrasts vivid and innumerable. Bankers and their clerks, merchants and their

porters, mechanics and their employers, the ragamuffin from Baker street, and the millionaire from Walnut, were mingled in the dense throng, packed side by side, sighing, groaning, weeping together. Every soul hung on the Preacher's voice. When his accents fell, you were appalled by the awful stillness of the place. When his voice arose in thunder tones, it was answered by an hundred others. Some uttered heart-rending shrieks, others incoherent moans, and there were those who, with clasped hands and streaming eyes, looked upward without a word.

No wonder that the Unknown was for a moment confused and blinded by the scene. A dense crowd intervened between him and the pulpit. Over their heads he caught a glimpse of the Preacher's face, for an instant only, and then all was blank again. He heard his voice, but could not see his face.

"It is the face of a man of forty years—nay thirty—and seems softened by an expression that might well be called holy"—thus the Unknown murmured, as he stood walled in by the crowd.

Presently a new phase of this remarkable scene took place. The Preacher had finished his prayer—he was coming down the pulpit steps—the crowd gave way, and the Unknown caught a clear view of his face and form.

The Unknown took in this picture at a glance.

A man of the medium size, clad in a black frock coat, which fitted him like a glove; a white cravat, and a shirt bosom whiter than snow; pantaloons elegantly made, fitting closely around small and neatly shaped boots; one hand extended as if in the act of a blessing, the other grasping a handkerchief which looked like a snow-flake; altogether a fine looking, yes, a handsome man. Was he thirty, forty, or fifty years of age? The Unknown could not tell. His brown hair, worn close to the head, fell in a graceful wave over the centre of his forehead; his eyes small but brilliant, shone with inexpressible animation; there was an enticing smile about his mouth, whose lips were rather full and warm.

He stepped gracefully, lightly, down the pulpit steps, waving his kerchief gently in one hand. The crowd gave way, and many persons sank before him in a half kneeling posi-

tion. His apparel exhaled a delicious perfume, which reached the nostrils of the Unknown, as he stood ten paces from the pulpit. In a word, as the Preacher descended the steps, his eyes roving over the throng who bowed or knelt before him, he seemed to swell in every pulse with an emotion which was either religion or gratified vanity.

Now it was that the Unknown bent forward with parted lips and flashing eyes—perusing the Preacher's face with an intense gaze, and awaiting the first word from his lips, with every faculty of his soul.

"Ellen!" he whispered the name, and pressed forward through the crowd until he stood at the foot of the pulpit steps.

"O, dear brother, how eloquent you were to-night!" said a woman's voice, and a lady very richly attired, brushed past the Unknown, and sought the Preacher's hand. "You were more than eloquent. Indeed it seemed to me—"

The Preacher took her hand and whispered a word, as he bent the force of his gaze upon the animated and glowing face before him.

"To-morrow night, my dear sister Sophia, I will take tea at your house. Is brother Snawlip well?"

She was a woman something above the common stature, with a proud bust, enveloped in a rich shawl, and a voluptuous face framed in a bonnet, which, with its plume of snowy feathers, gave a warm relief to her features.

"To-morrow night, Brother," began the beautiful woman, Mrs. Sophia Snawlip, (of whom we have heard something ere this) when she was thrust aside by an eager throng, who rushed forward, eager to speak a word with the Popular Preacher.

"Brother, Brother, what shall I do to save my soul?" cried an aged man, whose voice and features bespoke the very extremity of terror—or despair—"Do you think—do you believe that the world will come to an end on that day?"

"Pray for me," said a rudely clad man, whose under features were corrugated by an agony, at once physical and mental—"Pray for me, Brother——"

Then three women, bent forward with one impulse and seized the Preacher by the arms, their faces bathed in tears. They could not

speak, for their hearts seemed too full for utterance, but with disordered apparel and frightened looks, looked imploringly into the Preacher's visage.

He had a word for all. A word spoken very low, and with inexpressible sweetness. A word imbued with the very spirit of Religion, and which was received with awe, with gratitude, with tears.

He came down the steps—his arm touched the Unknown, who trembled visibly, biting his lips, and growing suddenly pale.

"It cannot be the same!" he murmured, gazing upon that Face, which was softened in every line by the impulse of deep religious feeling. "No! I am mistaken!"

And with straining eyes, he followed the Preacher, who now had left the Pulpit steps and was slowly making his way toward the Mourner's Bench.

The Mourner's Bench?

It stood before the railing in front of the Pulpit, and was simply a long bench of unpainted pine, which extended for some three yards, in the thickest of the throng. Here they came, whose hearts had been terror-stricken by the Preacher's words; here, with heads bent and hands clasped, of all sexes and conditions, they raised their voices together, and besought Hope—Mercy—at the hands of God.

The Unknown silently followed the Preacher to the Mourner's Bench.

Not only here, but within the railing and around the Communion Table, crowds of despair-stricken supplicants were on their knees, mingling their voices with the common prayer.

The hearts of thousand people were stirred by the same fear. It was not so much a fear of Death, as a fear of a world in flames, and an Avenging God enthroned in judgment clouds, while one-half at least of the innumerable millions of earth—his creatures—souls born of his brightness—were doomed by his Voice, to misery without a limit, and despair that was to grow blacker and deeper through the unfathomable ages of Eternity.

The World was to come to an end on the Twenty-Third of April. All the millions now living, all the millions who have lived, will be gathered together, in the fields of infinite

Space, before the judgment bar of Omnipotence. The elements will melt with fervent heat; the heavens roll away like a parched scroll; the sun will expire amid the agonies of all created things; darkness will descend at once, upon the faces and the hearts of all the inhabitants of earth. It will not be light again, until from the bosom of Eternity, the Son of Man appears, encircled by his angels, with the blessed looking up in rapture, as they see His face, and the lost gnashing their teeth, and beating their foreheads against the cindered earth, at the sound of His coming. Then will occur the scene, to which all the scenes of the world's history are as nothing. The mysteries of science, the pomp of armies, the power of kings, the words of prophets, even the mysterious might which moved the universe of stars into action, are in no wise comparable to this scene, which ends the history of an Old Creation, and amid the howls of sinners and the songs of saints, opens the first leaf of a New Heaven and a New Earth. Even the Power which created a world from Nothing, was to be immeasurably surpassed by the Omnipotent Love and Vengeance, which would part the great family of humanity into the Saved and Lost, on the Judgment Day.

Such had been the purport of the Preacher's sermon, and it was the Thought of the Judgment Day, which crushed the hearts of a thousand human beings into dead awe, or maddened every pulse into the last extremity of despair. This will come, the Preacher had said; it is near at hand. The voice of God recorded in Daniel, the terrible drama embodied in the Book of Revelations, all point to the Nineteenth Century, as the last Century of the World. Even if this event does not occur on the Twenty-Third of April, it is certain to occur to all of us before many years are gone—to many of us even before the Appointed Day.

You may imagine the emotion of a thousand people, who actually believed words like these—were as vividly impressed with their truth, as they were with their own bodily existence.

CHAPTER SEVENTEENTH.

NINE MOURNERS.

AND now the Preacher approached the Mourner's Bench, where some ten persons

men and women were kneeling, their agony, by its very intensity, separating them from the rest of the Congregation.

The Unknown followed at his heels, his pulse beating in irregular throbs, his blood icy and fevered by sudden alternations.

"I will watch him in every action," he muttered, "I will test his sincerity by a last experiment. When he has gone from one end of the Mourner's Bench to the other, and conversed with every one of the mourners, I will confront him, and speak only a Word. If he is *not the man whom I seek*, that Word will only excite his wonder. If he is guilty, that Word will strike him as the hand of Death."

The Preacher began his work at the Mourner's Bench. He bent in a half-kneeling position, and conversed in a low voice with the first Mourner.

"Brother, Brother my sins weigh me down, they crush me to the very depths of despair"—mourned the first Mourner, who was a man of mature years, respectably clad, and with a hard, bilious countenance—"I have sinned! I have sinned! Pray for me! Many years ago, in the course of trade, Brother, I sold the bed from under a dying woman. I hurled her children houseless into the streets. It was all right then—so I thought—perfectly fair and in due course of law. But now—now, I see it in another light. Those children made homeless by my hands, may have since been plunged into crime. That widow may have since died in the harlot's ditch. This—" his hard features were grotesquely distorted with the violence of his emotion—"this is not all, for—"

The words which he whispered in the ear of the Preacher, were not audible to the Unknown, but he bent down, even behind the Preacher's back, and awaited his answer.

"Your crimes indeed are fearful," said the Preacher, as he applied his kerchief to his nostrils—"But there is Mercy, even for you. Make restitution—make restitution. Give back to the widow and the orphan that which you have stolen from their hearth. Repent, restore and hope!"

No words can describe the sweetness of the Preacher's voice, and while he spoke, at every period he placed the kerchief to his nostrils.

In the action, a diamond ring glittered on the second finger of his delicate hand.

"It is not the same," muttered the Unknown, with a mingled feeling of doubt and satisfaction, and he listened as the Preacher conversed with the second mourner.

An aged woman, whose gray hairs, struggling from beneath a faded bonnet, fell over features sharp and withered, and wandered down, even to the cloak which enveloped her attenuated frame.

"What shall I do to be saved?" she mumbled—for her teeth were gone, and her voice was thick and indistinct—"My sins are so heavy, so very heavy. I am very poor now, and want a crust of bread, but once I was rich,—do you mind me, Brother, rich? How did I make my money? That's what troubles me. Do you think there is any mercy for me?" she raised her sharp and wrinkled features to the light, until her large gray eyes shone like bits of glass, set in a waxen face—"Do you think there is any mercy for me?"

"How did you make your money?" whispered the Preacher, resting one knee upon the carpet, as he touched his nostrils with the kerchief at every other word.

The Unknown did not hear the answer, but saw a latent smile play about the Preacher's lips, as he shaded his brow with the hand glittering with the diamond ring.

"Your crime in truth is fearful. You have made riches on the ruins of female innocence. But even for you, erring Sister, there is mercy."

And the Preacher passed on to the third mourner.

A cloud came over the face of the Unknown; he did not like that smile; but, following the Preacher closely—unnoticed by the crowd, who were praying, weeping, shouting, on every hand—he again bent down and listened to his words.

"I am lost!" moaned the third mourner, in a voice which made the blood run cold, "I have committed the Unpardonable Sin. There is no hope. No! no! no! You need not think it! There is no hope for me!"

It was a woman of some thirty five years, whose pallid features were encircled by a dark bonnet, and whose eyes of clear light hazel, were wild and feverish in their glance.

The Preacher took her white hand within his own, and gazed intently into her eyes.

"Sister, there is no reason for despair," he whispered, "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow."

"We were very poor—that is my daughter and myself. We had not a penny to bless us," the woman thus incoherently murmured her confession in the hearing of the Preacher and the Unknown: "There was a wealthy man who made love to my daughter, and though she could not love him, for he was ugly, and withered, and old, I forced my child to accept the marriage. And now, what will become of me? My child is dead with her dead baby on her breast—what will all my money do for me on *that* day?"

The Unknown was much affected by this picture of immovable despair. Bending down until his face almost rested on the Preacher's shoulder, he drank in his reply. It was given in that sweet, calm—almost effeminate voice—and with a constant application of the kerchief to the nostrils.

"Have faith, Sister—there is no reason for despair," he murmured, pressing her hand kindly, and passed on.

The fourth mourner was a father, whose harshness had driven his son to sea, where he had died under the lash of an American Ship of War. The sixth, a brother who had robbed his brother of his patrimony, hurled him from his door, and refused to visit him on his dying bed. The seventh, a Banker who had retired with a fortune on the failure of his corporation, and lived luxuriantly, while the doors of the closed Bank were surrounded day and night by crowds of impoverished and helpless creditors. The eighth, a poor man, whose knotted hands betrayed a life of hard labor, and whose soul was stained with no enormous crime, but who had been horror-stricken by the Preacher's picture of the last day. The ninth, a rude sailor, with sun-burnt face and bushy whiskers—a form of iron encased in a sailor's jacket and trowsers—whose heart, untouched by the terrors of battle was melted into very womanhood, by the Preacher's words.

And to all of these the Preacher spoke in a low voice, whose very sweetness made it distinct and emphatic, even amid the uproar of

the crowded church. To every one some word of comfort, while the ring glittered on his finger, and the perfumed kerchief was incessantly applied to his nostrils.

The face of the Unknown became clouded by a deeper doubt. He stood still, in the midst of the scene, while the Preacher hurried to the tenth and last mourner at the Mourner's Bench.

Pressing his hand against his forehead, his heart wandered away from that scene of religious enthusiasm and despair, to a quiet western town, hidden away far beyond the mountains, in a nook of hills crowned with golden harvests and emerald forest trees. A rustic church, a grave-yard encircled by a stone wall, overgrown with briars, a new-made grave, and a circle of mourners gathering round a coffin, whose silver plate shone brightly in the afternoon sun—this picture was stamped upon the heart of the Unknown, as he stood silent and motionless in the midst of that scene of frenzy and despair.

"It was a strange dream," he murmured aloud—his words unheeded amid the uproar—"As I was journeying home, fresh from the scenes of the old world, and most anxious to behold the scenes of my native fireside, I slept one night in a rude hovel near the mountain top. We were crossing the Alleghenies, and the stage coach had been overturned—I remember it well! I sank to sleep, thinking of Home, of Ellen, when I beheld a scene which I shall never forget, while there is a throb in my veins——"

He started suddenly, like a man waking from a sound slumber, as he found himself *thinking aloud*; and with a half muttered ejaculation, turned his eyes to the window, which had afforded him entrance to the Church.

"This is no place for me," said he. "It is evident that I have been mistaken. This Preacher is not the man whom I seek. There is no longer any need of my remaining here. And that Dream upon the mountain summit—ah! I believe I am going mad!"

He turned toward the window, making his way with difficulty, through the confused groups, his countenance stamped with apathy, his eye cold and vacant, when a new phase of the scene wrung an exclamation from his lips, and held him motionless.

In his effort to reach the window, he had almost trodden upon the Preacher, who was kneeling at the Mourner's Bench.

The Preacher, as he knelt, conversed in low tones, with the Tenth Mourner.

CHAPTER EIGHTEENTH.

THE TENTH MOURNER.

It was a picture which the Unknown beheld, never to forget, until his last hour.

The Tenth Mourner was a young girl, poorly clad, with a faded shawl thrown back from her shoulders. The masses of her jet-black hair, were surmounted by a hood—altogether mean and poverty-stricken in appearance—which hung upon the back of her head. And, encircled by that dark hair, which half loosened, lay in disordered waves about her neck and shoulders, appeared a face whose remarkable beauty rivetted at once the gaze of the Unknown. Her dark eyes were wet with tears. Her nether lip moved tremulously; and the full breast, revealed in its coarse garmenture, by the falling aside of the shawl, heaved and sank with an irregular pulsation. And notwithstanding the tears which trembled on the fringes of her eyelids, the emotion which made her face grow pale, and her bosom beat with irregular throbs, this young girl was very beautiful. The very disorder of her hair, only gave a new charm to her face. The shawl hanging loosely on her arms, revealed a neck and shoulder dazzling in their whiteness.

She was kneeling the Tenth Mourner at the Mourner's Bench; her small hand clasped by the Preacher, who conversed with her in low, almost inaudible tones.

As the Unknown stood behind the Preacher, he could not see his face. But he caught a word, now and then, of a conversation which he held with the young girl—nay—was it a vain fancy? He perceived the Preacher's hand press rather forcibly the delicate hand of the young girl.

What was the nature of the conversation which they held together?

The Unknown formed a sudden resolution. There was a vacant place beside the beautiful girl. He resolved to kneel there, to bury his face in his hands, and listen to the low-toned conversation of the girl and the Preacher.

And at the same time he would test the

character of the Preacher, by an experiment of a strange and desperate nature, which had been in his mind ever since he saw the Preacher's face.

With these thoughts, he silently approached the Mourner's Bench, and taking a kerchief from the breast of his overcoat, was about sinking on his knees beside the girl, when his attention was attracted by a third person, who stood at the end of the bench, also a spectator of the scene.

As this person may play no unimportant part in the histories of all the characters of this narrative, we will hazard a brief description of his appearance.

He was very tall, very thin, and his large head was placed upon narrow and uneven shoulders. He wore a bang-up of fine grey cloth, which, thrown open, disclosed a dress of dark blue cloth underneath. A heavy watch-seal glittered below his waistcoat. His garments were not altogether fashionable in their style; but were marked by a certain singularity, which would have made the wearer an object of notice in any company. They were fine in texture; were as glossy as though they had but passed, a moment before, from the hands of the tailor; and yet their "cut," to speak in the rhetoric of the trade, was by no means of the latest fashion. The face of this individual was in marked contrast with his form. The head was large, but from the forehead, which was scattered thinly with brown hairs, to the chin, his face, viewed directly from the front, resembled an inverted pyramid. The cheeks hollow and sunken; the mouth large, with imperceptible lips; the chin heavy and square; the nose bold and Roman; the large blue eyes looking cold as ice, from lids which protruded until they were on a line with the brow; the brow itself increasing in width from the temple to the crown, and at the crown as flat as the surface of a dollar: a face like this would rivet the gaze at any time, and even now, amid the ever-changing excitement of the Church, it held the eyes of the Unknown enchained, as by an irresistible magnetism.

"This is not the first time that I have seen your face," half murmured the Unknown, as he stood hesitating, ere he knelt, beside the beautiful girl. While the murmur was on his tongue, he saw the gaze of this personage

centre attentively upon the girl and the Preacher, while a smile moved his almost imperceptible lips.

That gaze, so cold, so icy, and yet so full of latent scorn—or was it merely compassion?—filled the Unknown with a sensation of uneasiness and suspicion.

However, he sank on his knees beside the girl, burying his face in his kerchief, and resting his elbows on the Mourner's Bench.

"After a little while I will try the experiment," the thought half escaped his lips, when the low tones of the Preacher, and the agitated whispers of the girl, came distinctly to his ear.

"Your name is ——" began the Preacher.

"Fanny," replied the girl, "Fanny Jones."

"And you entered this Church in order to solicit my prayers at the bedside of a dying woman?"

The Unknown became interested; still covering his face, he inclined his head toward the girl.

"No—no—not yours, not yours," replied the girl, hurriedly; "I came after Mr. Marvin, the Millerite, but was entangled in the crowd, and could not get out again. O, sir, I beseech you, come with me, let us leave the Church, or—or—" her voice grew fainter and fainter—"my mother may be dead before I return."

"Presently I will go with you," whispered the Preacher. "But tell me, my young and beautiful Sister, is your heart in no wise affected by the words which you have heard this night?"

The Unknown stole a glance over the edge of his kerchief, and saw at once the face of the Preacher, and the countenance of the girl. She was deathly pale, but very beautiful; he, pressing her hand, was looking intently in her countenance, while his small eyes dilated, and shone with peculiar lustre.

The young girl seemed puzzled by the question of the Preacher. It was a moment ere she replied.

"I heard very much to-night, about the last day and the end of the world, but—but—"

"Your heart was affected, then? Answer frankly, my dear sister?"

"But all the time the face of my mother was in my mind and while you were preaching—I know it's wicked but I could not help it—I only heard the last words of my mother."

"Then why do I find you at the Mourner's Bench?" asked the Preacher.

"Why the noise frightened me, and I was hurried here by the crowd. And when I saw so many people weeping and praying, I began also to weep and pray—I don't know why—and—" she paused.

Again over the edge of his kerchief the Unknown looked stealthily. Her dark eyes had brightened into an irresistible earnestness. There was a glimpse of a rose-bud on her cheek. The Preacher was bending forward, his lips parted and his eye dilating, while his hand with the diamond ring still pressed the hand of the girl.

"Do come—do come, and pray with mother!" ejaculated the girl. "They will make way for you, and we can go out of Church together. Do not refuse me, because I am so poor, so wicked. Come—"

"Where do you reside?"

The girl hesitated, as if ashamed to name her residence:

"In Bonus Court," she said, after a moment's pause; "a very poor place, and eight squares off, but I'm sure you will come."

You may imagine the intense interest with which the Unknown awaited the reply of the Preacher.

"Have you no fear for your own soul?"—the Preacher's voice was lower, deeper than ever, and took the senses by storm.

"My soul! Indeed, good sir, we are so poor that we don't like to go to Church, and I have to work so hard all the week, that on Sunday I am too tired to do anything but take a look now and then at our Bible. And—and—it seems to me that if all this that you were sayin' about the soul was true; that these people with so much money would be kinder to those who have none. And I've often thought, as I sat alone at home, that with all our wretchedness, we poor people are the very kind of people whom our Saviour came to make happier. I have indeed. And when I sit alone at my sowin', I often find myself prayin' without words—you know what I mean?—and I feel a warm feelin' here—here—as if the good Lord had spoken in his own way, even to me, and as if he had taken pity on me, and came to me, and made my heart feel happy—though I was all the time too poor to go to Church."



"RALPH BEHELD THE MAN SLOWLY TAKE OFF HIS FACE, AS THOUGH IT WERE BUT AN ARTICLE OF WEARING APPAREL."—See p. 74.



We have reported this simple declaration in its own simple way.

The Unknown could not restrain the tears which started to his eyes. He stole another glimpse from behind the kerchief. The face of the poor girl was radiant, glowing; her breast heaved with a violent movement; her hair escaping in one mass from beneath her hood, fell freely over her uncovered shoulder.

Meanwhile the intent look of the Preacher, began to assume a fixed and intelligible meaning.

"His face is flushed," thought the Unknown, "He looks ten years younger."

That small eye dilating until the white of the eyeball was visible — that nether lip gently projecting, and assuming a deep red hue — that hand pressing the fingers of the girl, and absently displaying the diamond ring, until it shone like a star — what was the meaning of all this?

CHAPTER NINETEENTH.

FANNY AND THE PREACHER.

"Did you ever go to any Church before?" asked the Preacher.

"Oh, yes, to a grand Church, where there were pews, and people's names in silver, on their doors," replied the girl — "And I often used to sit away up in the gallery, next to the wall, on the benches which are set aside for poor folks, and look down over the great crowd of rich folks, in their elegant dresses, and wonder whether they were made of the same flesh and blood as me? It seemed so queer. There, right below me, in his pew, with his wife and children by his side, was the gentleman who used to pay me sixteen cents a-piece for makin' a shirt. And I often and often wondered, whether his children would ever be forced to live in a dark court, and make shirts for sixteen cents a-piece. I really cried at the thought, for his daughter looked so beautiful and happy. And there, was a sweet young lady, all dressed so grand in a shawl — such a shawl! — who had once paid me to make her a dress, and given me a whole dollar for three days' work. Mother and me made it together — a whole dollar, you know? And I'd wonder and wonder as I sat in the gallery, whether it would be so in Heaven; that is, you understand, whether poor folks would have to sit on benches

against the wall, while the rich ones had the grand pews to themselves! Do you think it will be so up there?"

The Unknown could scarcely believe his ears. So strange a mingling of good sense and extreme simplicity he had never encountered before. Looking from behind his kerchief he saw that beautiful face, glowing from lip to eye, with an expression of child-like simplicity, while the Preacher, still keeping her hand, opened his eyes, with very wonder — or maybe — very horror, at the discourse of this young girl.

"But we have no pews in our Church," whispered the Preacher. "The seats are free."

"Are they?" and the eyes of the young girl, roved vacantly around, with a glance of almost ludicrous amazement. "Still one does not like when one's so poor, to walk up a broad aisle, and sit down among so many nicely dressed people. One does not indeed."

The Preacher was silent. Stealing a covert glance, the Unknown beheld the face of the poor girl; it was pale once more and the eyes were obscured by tears. The hand of the Preacher still clasped her hand, but his unoccupied hand, was pressed against his brow. He seemed agitated by a deep emotion; of what character the Unknown could not determine.

Meanwhile, at the end of the Mourner's Bench, lean and erect, stood the gentleman in the grey bang-up, his cold gaze fixed upon the countenance of the girl, with an earnestness that excited the curiosity of the Unknown.

"Come — let us leave this place!" said Fanny, with a flood of tears — "My mother is dying — you will not refuse me."

The Unknown held his breath, as he listened impatiently for the Preacher's reply. But the Preacher seemed buried in profound thought; he did not answer the prayer of the poor girl.

"I know we are very poor, but you will not refuse us on that account —" the voice of Fanny, was heard once more.

"No, my dear Sister, I will not refuse you. I will go with you, and pray with your dying mother. Yet first I must return for a few moments to the residence of a dear Brother, whose guest I am at present. You can go

with this Brother to his house, and wait for me?"

The Unknown inclined his head near and nearer to the girl who was weeping by his side.

"Yes, I will go—willingly. But you will not be long?" was the eager response. "How far is it from here?"

In a low voice the Preacher stated the street and the number of the good Brother's house.

It was with great difficulty that the Unknown could repress a loud cry of astonishment.

"*It is the house, whose name and number are inscribed upon the card which was given to me by the Dry Goods' Merchant,*" he muttered, and trembling all over, with a nervous excitement, he awaited the sequel of the scene.

"Brother Caleb—" said the Preacher.

The Unknown looked once more from the shadow of his kerchief, and saw the personage in the grey bang-up, bend down toward the Preacher, while a smile agitated his lips.

"Well, Brother—" answered Brother Caleb.

"Will you take the arm of our young Sister, and leave the Church by the stairs which descend to the basement story? For you cannot possibly get through the crowd which lines the aisles. In a few moments I will join you at your House."

"With pleasure, dear Brother," answered Brother Caleb, as his glassy look rested upon Fanny's face. "Come, Sister. Ah—allow me to arrange your shawl. Now we can depart. This way, my child."

Fanny rising from her knees, took the arm of Brother Caleb, looking up into his singular countenance, with a glance of wondering curiosity.

"You will not be long, good Sir?" she turned her eloquent eyes toward the Preacher.

"In a few moments I will be with you," answered the Preacher, still on his knees.

And the Unknown saw the tall form of Brother Caleb, moving through the crowd, toward the stairway at the back of the Church. For a moment he caught a glimpse of Fanny's face, and then she was gone. Yet he gazed toward the place, where he last beheld the twain, with a look of apathetic wonder, while

two or three minutes elapsed. The singular termination of this scene, for the time, deprived him of all presence of mind.

"Now I will attempt the *final experiment*," he thought, and removing the kerchief looked into the face of the kneeling Preacher; but the Preacher had disappeared; his place by the Mourner's Bench was vacant. "Ah—there he is," muttered the young man, "making excuses for his untimely withdrawal, to the regular Minister of the Church. In a moment he will pass this way, and then—"

The moment arrived ere the murmured word had passed his lips. The Preacher, hat in hand and cloak on his arm, was making his way toward the staircase—his eye flashing with peculiar animation, and his lips wreathing with a smile—when the Unknown, bent over the Mourner's Bench, and seized his wrist with both hands, exclaiming in a broken voice—

"Brother pray for me!"

The Preacher thus suddenly brought to a pause, was naturally stricken with some degree of astonishment. His cloak—it was a splendid mantle, lined with velvet—dropped across the Mourner's Bench, and his hat fell from his hand. He regarded this young man, dressed in the bear-skin overcoat, and kneeling at his feet, with a violent emotion writhing over his face, with a vague and wondering stare.

"Excuse me, Brother," he said in a sweet voice, and with a winning smile; "I am summoned from the Church by the request of a dying woman. There are many Brethren here who will willingly aid you with their prayers. Hold! my good Brother, you may not be aware of it, but you hurt my wrist—"

"You—and you only—can aid me with your prayers!" whispered the Unknown, and looking eagerly into the Preacher's face, he clutched his wrist with an iron grasp; "I am a miserable sinner. Your words have opened the very fountains of my soul. O, tell me, tell me, how shall I escape from this burden which sinks me down—down—to the nethermost pit of despair. Nay—you must hear me—you, alone can lift the curse from my soul!"

The Preacher was fairly *wrung* to his knees, by the frenzied grasp of the Unknown.

"Brother," he whispered, amid his astonishment, "be calm—"

"Calm! Look into my face," and the Unknown bent over the Bench until his breath was felt on the Preacher's cheek. "Look into my face, I say. Look! Can you read the record that is written here!"

No wonder that the Preacher was surprised. For this face, with its eyes deep sunken beneath the bushy brows, its forehead half shaded by disordered hair, and corrugated by deep lines, its mouth quivering with agony, resembled the visage of a Madman. The Preacher changed color; he was pallid and flushed by turns; his small eyes expanded with surprise and fear.

"Indeed, dear Brother, you hurt my wrist," he faltered.

The face of the Unknown was calm as marble in an instant. His eyes shone with clear lustre; his lips were animated by a calm smile. But strange to say, this sudden calmness disturbed the Preacher more than the frenzied agony.

"Truly, my good sir—" he did not say *my good Brother* on this occasion—"you detain me—indeed—"

"Now, I will see whether he can trace a family likeness in my face," was the singular thought of the Unknown, as he gazed calmly into the eyes of the Preacher.

To tell the truth, that eloquent man was agitated beyond measure. Was it because he fancied that the Unknown was a Madman, or—did some memory of the Past gleam terribly upon him from that smiling visage?

"Have I ever met you before?" he asked hesitatingly.

"Never, my dear sir, never. Do you remember my face?" answered the Unknown.

The Preacher dropped his eyes, and seemed buried in thought. When he raised his gaze once more, his face was altogether calm.

"I never saw you before," he exclaimed, and gazed steadily upon the face of the young man: "Never. Will you have the goodness to release my wrist, and permit me to depart. Or, if you have any communication to make to me, let me beseech you to make it as briefly as possible—"

Why was the face of the Unknown shadowed by a sudden cloud?

"*Can it be the man whom I seek?*" he asked himself, and then exclaimed aloud—"Pardon my want of courtesy, Reverend Sir. But my business is urgent. Behold in me the most abject wretch now living on the face of the earth. Yes, behold in me the seducer of an innocent and beautiful maiden. I wronged her—married her—and then left her to a broken heart and an untimely grave. This is my crime. I am devoured by the agonies of the damned. Her image haunts me wherever I go. I hear her voice wherever I turn. In the haunts of daily life—in the thronged streets—in the silence of my sleepless nights—nay in this very Church—she is with me, whispering in my ear, gliding by my side, confronting me with her pale, withered face, and eyes radiant with the fires of Death. Nay—there—" his voice sank; he bent forward, while his eyes expanded in their sockets—"There at your shoulder she stands. Look! Do you not see her?"

The Preacher turned abruptly, and looked around as though the Dead Girl stood living by his side.

"Your words chill me to the heart," he said, in a low voice. "They make the clammy moisture start in beads upon my forehead—" he passed his scented kerchief over his face with a tremulous hand. "Indeed your crime is terrible, and your Remorse almost beyond belief. But you must not despair—hope, my brother, hope—"

The sentence was never completed. For seizing his hat and cloak, the Preacher tore his wrist from the grasp of the Unknown, and glided into the crowd who encircled the Mourner's Bench. It was done in a moment. While the young man was gazing in doubt and curiosity upon his face, listening to his broken words, he started up, and ere the Unknown could frame a word, was gone.

The singular mingling of surprise and dismay which came over the face of the Unknown, as he gazed around with vacant eyes, was almost ludicrous to witness.

He arose to his feet without a word. His glance traversed the thousand faces of St. Simon's, but in vain. There were Preachers conversing with the mourners, there were grave matrons bending beside weeping girls, there

were old men on their knees, with little children by their side, but the Preacher—the Popular Preacher—had disappeared.

CHAPTER TWENTIETH.

"TO THE HOUSE OF BROTHER CALEB."

Sick at heart, confused by a world of doubts and fears, the Unknown leaned against the pulpit railing, and shading his eyes with his cap—which he took from a side pocket—endeavoured to think calmly, even amid the boundless excitement of the scene.

And as he endeavoured to collect his thoughts, three faces were incessantly before him:—

First, the face of Fanny the poor girl, shaded by raven hair, and beautiful even amid the mists of poverty which encircled it, came to him, like an actual thing, and moved incessantly before his eyes.

Then the face of the Popular Preacher, which now was young, and suddenly was old, which one moment shone with emotion, almost divine, and the next instant was pale, haggard and convulsed, as with sympathy or Remorse—this face came with the face of the Poor Girl, and floated before the mental eye of the Unknown.

Then Brother Caleb's visage, with protruding eyeballs, sunken cheeks and massy forehead—flat as a dollar at the crown—agitated his fancy, with a sensation of involuntary loathing.

And last of all a country churchyard, with a new-made grave in its centre, yawning amid its drifts of snow, and a coffin, encircled by a silent crowd, with its silver plate shining in the afternoon sun.

These three faces, combined with the last picture, for a long time agitated the mind of the Unknown.

"Can he be the same man?" he murmured to himself. "Is it possible that a man can stand up and from the pulpit proclaim the damnation of the sinner, while his own life is tainted to the core by perjury, seduction, and slow, cool, calculating Murder? No—no. He trembled as I spoke; 'twas because he thought me mad. I was about to pronounce the Name of Ellen, to produce that lock of her hair, to repeat the words which she uttered in my dream—when he disappeared. And Fanny—why is my heart so deeply interested in that

poor girl? What have I to do with Brother Caleb? Ah—dolt that I am! I had forgotten; his house was the rendezvous for a singular meeting. At twelve to-night—at twelve to-night—"

The last words were uttered aloud, as the young man raised his eyes, and from his place at the foot of the pulpit, looked over the scenes of St. Simon's.

"There are many men who would only find food for mirth and derision in this scene. These mourners, beseeching Mercy at the hands of God—these old men, aroused for the first time into the consciousness of a life of crimes—these matrons, who pray beside the weeping girls—these Preachers, who thread the aisles, proclaiming at once the vengeance and the mercy of God—these women, stretched before me as if in a Trance, their limbs stiffened and their faces cold as death—all this would afford but food for mirth and derision to the minds of a certain class, and to none more so, than those who worship by mechanism, and say their prayers as they would play a game of chess. Their derision would be turned to utter scepticism, were they told that the Preacher who has been the Agent of all this excitement, was nothing but a hollow-hearted Sensualist. But for myself, as I stand here by the pulpit steps and judge it with my own eyes, what shall I say? Admitting that the Preacher is a sensualist, and these manifestations of Religion are extravagant to the last degree, shall I therefore call this Religion a falsehood, the mode of worship an idle play, a hollow mockery? Not so—not so. Standing as I do now, on the very crisis of my fate, assured that the morrow can only bring me the memory of my murdered Sister, or the task of avenging her murder, I feel most vividly that *that Form of Religion only is false which teaches one sect to deride another, and with its dogmas buries and confounds that principle of Universal Brotherhood which flowed from the life of Christ himself.*"

Strange thoughts these, you will say, for a mere worldling like our Unknown?

And do you think that thoughts like these, are only to be found in the breasts of people who wear the garb of Religion? Think you, good brethren of the Synagogue, that the Divine Spirit never moves, save within your narrow

walls, and by your sectarian altar? In the heart of many a Worldling, stirs a diviner impulse than ever throbbed within the breast of many a cloaked Minister or mitred Bishop. Don't you think so? And even the Writer of Novels, who now sends these words to you, from his isolated room, may sometimes feel some impulses born of Eternity stirring within his bosom. Can you believe it? The pen which now writes, may do a braver, better work for Humanity, than the pen which merely writes a Sermon in defence of a mere creed, or turns ink to gall again, by putting down on pure white paper, some horrible Dogma of Theology, stolen from the cells of Heathen barbarity. Will you admit it?

Does it not seem preposterous to you that a Writer of Novels, shall dare to speak of Religion?

Why, you exclaim, does he not write us books on Chivalry, full of the Middle Ages, their romance and crimes, like Walter Scott; or why does he not tell us some funny story, that will make our sides shake and our buttons crack again? Why?

Because he is "*eccentric*." O lamentable and, *eccentric*! He thinks that the Novel which goes every where, and speaks to all hearts—speaks perchance to fifty thousand people at the same moment—may be made the instrument of that kind of Christianity which has only one word in its vocabulary—**BROTHERHOOD.**

He thinks—this profane Writer of Novels, mark you—that he, even he, has a work to do in the world, and that his work is to speak the wrongs and the hopes of Humanity in the parables of Fiction.

And sometimes, there comes a thought to him, that he is doing a better work by writing Novels, than he would be doing were he to put himself to making Sermons and tinkering Creeds. That the talent which is given him, is not given to be crushed. That when his pen no longer moves, and when the hand that grasps it now is gone to dust—when his place in your streets is vacant, and his room no longer witnesses his lonely vigil—that even then the words which he has written may do a good work in some heart yet unborn; and that some humble soul, sitting down by the wayside of the world, may bless his memory—even his, the Writer of Novels.

And thus it is, my respectable scorner of Novel Writers, that the Novel Writer has something good in his heart, and something Divine in the impulse which guides his pen.

But we must return to the thread of our history.

The Unknown, after a long pause of absorbing thought, drew forth his watch—

"It is nearly twelve," he murmured—"Now for the House of Brother Caleb!"

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIRST.

BROTHER CALEB'S HOUSE.

Leaving the Church of St. Simon, the Unknown made the best of his way to the house of Brother Caleb.

As he left the door of the Church, the State House Clock was striking twelve, and presently the Bell of St. Augustine's took up the story, and made the silence of midnight ring with its deep and sonorous tones:

In the course of a quarter of an hour, the Unknown arrived at the House of Brother Caleb. Gliding into the shadow of a tree-box, he pulled his cap over his forehead, raised the collar of his bearskin coat over his cheeks, and quietly surveyed the scene. The broad street in which the house was situated was quiet as a grave-yard. The tall edifices on the opposite side, rested in shadow, and over the roofs, sailing in a serene sky, the moon shone with clear and unchanging lustre. The House of Brother Caleb, therefore, was bathed in all the brightness of winter moonlight.

It stood in one of the largest streets of the Quaker City—a street running from the Delaware to the Schuylkill—and was the most imposing structure of an entire square. It was none of your miserable huts, skulking from the light, in the darkness of a Court. Nor was it a neat two story house, situated in a quiet street, with the trees before the door, rising above its roof. No. It was a four story edifice; aristocratic in its exterior, from the lofty range of marble steps, along the whole extent of its red bricks, varied by green blinds, even to the garret windows, somewhere in the sky. It stood in a square occupied by Merchant Princes—aristocrats of Trade, whose fortunes (or whose credit) were stated

at various incredible amounts, from fifty thousand to half a million dollars.

The houses of this square were remarkable for their clean pavements, their silver door-plates and their massive window panes, polished to a charm—in a word, for their extreme neatness, polished by the glare of wealth.

But the house of Brother Caleb was distinguished from all the others, by several details, which, trifling as they may appear, were yet calculated to excite the suspicion, at least the wonder, of his neighbors.

From the day on which he first entered this house, only six months ago, the green window-shutters had never once been unclosed. The other houses displayed their bright window panes and silken curtains, in every range of stories from the pavement to the roof. The House of Brother Caleb presented only a dull brick surface, and closed window-shutters of a dusty green.

Then, Brother Caleb was guilty of an important offence, which, in some neighborhoods of the Quaker City, is accounted as something worse than highway robbery, at all events as an equivalent of forgery.

He never had his pavement washed.

Let not the reader who is ignorant of the customs of Philadelphia, smile at the mysterious sentence. The washing of pavements is the daily care of all the matrons of the Quaker City, and the daily occupation of at least one-third of its female population. The house within may be dirty, but the pavement without must be clean. This is the Twelfth Commandment in the Quaker City. Woe to the unlucky wight, who, fresh from New York, or from the country, saunters along the streets of Philadelphia on a Saturday morning! He lifts his eyes to Heaven, and a housemaid's broom takes him off his feet. He surveys the windows of these elegant houses, and a bucket of the best Fairmount water souses him from head to foot. He incautiously ascends a range of marble steps, and a hose, grasped by a dripping damsel, whose very dress has an amphibious air, squirts freely into his face, and converts his new beaver into something very limp and soppy, before he can say a word. The very city itself looks to the deluded stranger, like an occidental Cairo, with the Nile on the rise—and spouting too, from

every hose pipe, and overflowing in every water bucket. Seriously, the mania for pavement washing, as it rages all the year round in Philadelphia, is something worse than the Yellow Fever. It affects all classes, from the poor female slave, who does all the drudgery of 'a large and respectable family,' for seventy-five cents per week, up to the fashionable lady, who spends her thousands on her dress, and shines at the Opera, or sails grandly up the broad aisle of the Church. Even the sedate country dame—lately removed from a rural village—who gazes at this mania with unfeigned wonder, is taken with it herself before many days, and seizing bucket and broom, washes and slops away, like a native to the soil. The results of this mania are wet feet and slippery pavements, terminating sometimes in broken necks, and, in nine cases out of ten, in the galloping Consumption.

This wonder, great as it was, and much as it was calculated to excite the suspicions of Brother Caleb's neighbours, was only a part of the mystery that encircled Brother Caleb.

He was rich, for he had paid some twenty thousand dollars for his house in "Drab Row." But was he married or was he single, or had he been divorced, or was he a widower, and where did he come from, and what was his business—such were the queries, which incessantly disturbed the "genteel" quiet of Drab Row.

To these you may add at pleasure, a series of inquiries like these: What Church does he belong to? Why does such a throng of visitors—male and female—pass through his door every night? Why do the men wear their hats over their eyes, and why are the women veiled? In a word, who is this Mister Caleb Goodleigh?

So, it is plainly to be seen that Brother Caleb was a mystery, and Brother Caleb's house a Haunted House. Haunted by whom? Ah, it was *that* which puzzled the millionaires of Drab Row.

"I have met this Brother Caleb before," murmured the Unknown, as he skulked behind the tree-box in front of Brother Caleb's door. "Met him in scenes far different from the present, but I cannot remember *where*. Was it in Paris?"

The Unknown was about to ascend the steps, and ring the bell, when his attention was attracted by approaching footsteps.

"It is Fanny and the Preacher," he exclaimed, "or Caleb and Fanny. I have gained the house quicker than they, notwithstanding I was delayed by the crowd of the Church."

Shadowing his form behind the tree-box, he impatiently awaited the approach of the newcomers. They drew near—he heard their footsteps on the icy pavement—they ascended the marble steps, and entered without ringing the bell.

It was neither Fanny nor the Preacher, nor even Brother Caleb, but a man and woman—cloaked to the eyes—he tall and portly, she also tall, and somewhat luxurious in the ample development of her proportions. They stood for a moment with their faces to the light, ere they silently entered the house of Brother Caleb, and the winter wind blew his cloak and her veil aside, so that the Unknown caught a glimpse of their features.

That solitary glimpse revealed a woman's face, beautiful and voluptuous—and the visage of a man, whose linaments were stamped with a singular mingling of "business tact" and coarse appetite.

"*I know you both*," muttered the Unknown, laughing to himself as they disappeared.

Nine times he was about to enter the house of Brother Caleb, and nine times he was arrested by the sound of approaching footsteps.

He saw—from his hiding place—nine persons enter the House, with an interval of a few moments between the arrival of each visitor.

Dicky Bung, flushed with liquor, and manifesting a strange inclination to wrench the bell-handle from its socket.

A short fat man, dressed in a dark overcoat, with a woollen comforter over the tip of his nose.

A bulky citizen with a gold-headed cane, and an asthmatic cough.

A trim little gentleman, attired in the very extreme of fashion, with a loose sack floating around his spare form, and white kid gloves on his delicate hands.

A slender person, in Quaker gear—overcoat of drab, with a straight collar, and hat of beaver, with a broad brim.

A pair of gentlemen, arm in arm, with their hats far down upon their foreheads, and with a certain vagueness about their gait, which gave remote ideas of an oyster supper, followed by a half dozen bottles of champagne.

A calm and composed citizen, dressed not so much in the fashion, as with that sleek neatness which indicates good credit, and a sound reputation on 'change.

And last of all, a bulky fellow, with a waddling gait and a knotted stick, and a face resembling a full moon on a foggy night.

"A police officer," muttered the Unknown, as the Ninth person disappeared—like all the rest, without ringing the bell—"This looks something like a mystery! Where is Brother Caleb? Where the Preacher? And Fanny, is she also among the mysterious guests of this most mysterious mansion?"

These questions seemed to defy the scrutiny of any one but a Prophet, or a Scotchman gifted with second sight.

"I will enter and set my doubts at rest," exclaimed the young man, and sprang toward the steps, when the rolling of carriage wheels struck his ear.

Gazing down the broad street, he saw a dark carriage, drawn by two white horses, and with a stalwart driver on the box. It approached with a speed unknown before in the history of hackney coaches. The driver was a huge man, dressed in glaring red, with buttons big as dollars, sprinkled all over his sanguineous attire.

"It's Peter!" cried the Unknown.

And the carriage stopped before the tree-box, in front of Brother Caleb's door. Above the collar of the red coat appeared a rubicund face, sprinkled with grey whiskers on either cheek.

"I'm come," said a gruff voice—"are you there, Charley?"

"Peter, have you the pistols?" whispered the Unknown, as he approached the carriage.

"Aye—aye. All right in this 'ere quarter," was the reply.

"And the gag?"

Peter growled a harsh assent.

"Move the carriage toward the opposite side of the street, out of the moonlight," whispered the Unknown, laying his hand upon the neck of the nearest horse. "Wait there, until I come. Do not go away on any account. You understand?"

"Aye—aye. All right I say in this 'ere quarter."

The carriage wheeled, went down the street, and presently came up again, and halted in the shadows opposite Drab Row.

And Peter, gazing from the eminence of his box, saw the Unknown pass up the marble steps and enter the house of Brother Caleb.

"I guess I'll have to wait a considerable bit" he said, as he deliberately surveyed the front of the "mysterious house."

And where in the meantime is Ralph?

He left his home in Bonus Court, some hours ago, a few moment's after Fanny's departure, and on a similar errand.

Shall we relate the history of Ralph's adventures while in search of a Priest, between the hours of nine and one o'clock?

CHAPTER TWENTY-SECOND.

THE MIDNIGHT MASS IN SAINT JOHN'S.

They were saying the Midnight Mass for the dead, within the Church of Saint John.

The moon was shining, cold and beautiful upon the white towers of the Church, and before its Gothic door gathered a silent crowd, whose faces were reddened by a stray gleam from the very altar of the temple.

The organ was moaning solemnly, and the voices of men and women, rising in a fervent chaunt, broke on the stillness of the winter air.

Without, the scene was impressive. The same ray which bathed the tall towers of the Church, shone upon a gloomy edifice directly opposite—a huge mishapen thing, built of brick, and standing in a dreary yard, fenced from the public street by unsightly walls. This was the Arsenal. Beyond, arose an edifice of marble, with its pure white walls and faultless pillars, gleaming coldly in the wintry moon. This was the Mint.

And Church and Mint and Arsenal, standing within a circle whose diameter was scarce two hundred yards—standing very near each other—bathed by the same ray—seemed to present three impressive types of the great impulses of human life, War, Money, and Religion.

Within the Arsenal, the swords rested in their scabbards, and the cannon slept snugly

in dark and masty vaults. Within the Arsenal were muskets in heaps, and bullets and cannon balls by the ton; all idle and useless as so much lumber.

Within the Mint was great store of copper cents and silver dollars and golden eagles. The copper by bushels' full, the dollars in neat square boxes; the eagles, mellow and beautiful, hidden away from the light in precious caskets. So many days' work of countless thousands of the poor, stowed neatly away within the still and the dark of the Marble Mint.

And as these three buildings stood so near each other, enlivened by the same moonbeam, the thought stole over you, that you beheld, not merely a Temple, a Mint and an Arsenal, but in sober truth Three Churches, ever at war with each other, and battling for the mastery along all the ways of life, from the cradle to the grave, the Church of Gold, the Church of Carnage and the Church of God.

And while the idle arms of bloodshed rusted within the Church of Carnage—unconscious that their rust was to be erased one day in the scenes of a murderous Riot—while the golden eagles slept in the Church of Gold, as quietly as though they were never to go forth at all, never to stir men's hearts with the fires of traffic or the lust of avarice—let us enter the Church of God, where the Midnight Mass is sounding over the funeral pall which hides the dead.

Shall we enter the Church?

It is a Catholic Church. We know that. A Roman Catholic Church. You are right. And you and I, as good Protestants, are bound to hate the Catholic Church, from its poorest Priest, its humblest Sister of Charity, up to the Pope himself, who, we all know, is the veritable Anti-Christ. Are we not? They tell us so in the Churches, those good Protestants who manifest their love of God, by hating heartily their neighbors. They tell us so in their pamphlets, those amiable Clergymen, who, having nothing to do at home, take up their minds altogether with the terrible Pope, and hurl their "No Popery" anathemas from a thousand presses, well oiled with orthodoxy, and baptized with fervent hate of Rome, and all that appertains to Rome. They tell us so, from the Pulpit, where we have heard some wretched Apostate, driven forth by his obscenities

by the hour, for the edification of pure maidens and chaste matrons, while reverend Divines sit in the background, chuckling at the exposure of the deformities of Rome.

Yes, it is our duty, first of all, to hate the Catholics, hate them heartily, with all our might, hate them in our Papers, in our Churches, in our Prayers. Hate them in our streets and homes, hate them before God and man, insult them at every turn of life, and thrust incessantly into their faces, Tracts and Pamphlets, rich with the gathered venom of three centuries of religious war.

And next to hating the Catholics, it is our duty to hate every Protestant sect which may differ from our own, either in the fashion of its steeple or its creed. As Presbyterians, we hate the Methodists; as Methodists, we hate the Presbyterians. As Episcopalians we hate them both. As Orthodox we hate the Heterodox; as men who go to steepled churches, we hate those poor deluded souls who frequent flat-roofed meetings. Baptizing by immersion, we hate all those who merely sprinkle, or trace the cross upon the brow of infant hope; or, having faith in sprinkling, we heartily despise all those who read *immerse* for *baptize*, and who, in their churches, have not merely a font for the head, but a fountain for the entire body. Let us hate with all our might. As Quakers, in plain clothes, we will hate all those who turn their collars down, or wear short rims to their hats; as believers in ministerial gowns, we will despise the Quakers, whose straight coats, wide rims, and barn-like meeting houses afflict our very souls. And thus getting rich in hate, we will end by calling every man an Infidel who may happen to tell us something of that Gospel of Humanity whose first word, and whose last is, Brotherhood. Will we not? Something there is so religious in all this religion of hatred, that it ends at last, by calling Infidel! through its set teeth, and making terrible faces at everybody, with its cadaverous jaws.

But let us go to the Catholic Church.

Through the crowd which blocks up the Gothic doorway, through the broad aisle, where living forms, wedged into one compact mass, are thrilled by one sensation—to the very altar. We stand, at last, breathless and wondering, amid the very mysteries of the scene.

It is altogether different from the Church in which we knelt some few moments ago. There we saw a pulpit, a wide gallery, square windows, and white glaring walls, in fact, a huge square room, tenanted by a thousand faces. There was a Popular Preacher, and a dense mass of hearers, and nothing more.

Here the scene is widely different. There is one bright space amid the awful gloom of the Church. Tall waxen candles are burning dimly around a coffin, covered with a black pall, from whose dead folds a white cross glares into view. Behind the funeral altar, an Image of the Crucified gleams on the eye, and there, among the deepest shadows, smiles Mother Mary, that Woman whose very memory has made the cares of Maternity divine. Around the veiled coffin are grouped the forms of children, clad in snowy garments, and swinging censers to and fro. There stands the Priest, whose slender form is buried in a gorgeous robe—gorgeous with the symbols of his Church, whose traditions are compressed in those enigmas of lace and tinsel.

And looking from that coffin, covered with black drapery, the Priest pierces the twilight, and beholds over the silent faces of the congregation, the pointed arches of the Church, rich and gloomy with the distinctive traits of Gothic Architecture. Arches that resemble the entwined branches of a grove of forest oaks; arches that are solemn and beautiful by daylight, when the sunshine steals through the pointed windows, with their diamond panes, stained with the hues of the rainbow; arches that now shadow with a voiceless gloom, these countless faces of Saint John's.

Low, faint, tremulous, the Organ sighs. Faint and fainter the voices of the chaunters die away. Soft and fleecy the smoke of the censers steals up into the darkness. White and spectre-like the candles rise around the coffin, and each candle is crowned by a circle of pale, ghostly light. The Midnight Mass for the Dead is sounding, and every heart beats faint with awe. The soul of the dead is in Eternity, while the corpse rests by the Altar; rests under a pall of velvet and a white cross, with the faces of the Crucified and his Virgin Mother not far away.

You cannot distinctly see the faces of the congregation, but those which are near the

light are deadened with an almost painful awe — and tears are glittering on every cheek.

What means the scene?

Who is it that is buried with all this sombre glory? Whose corse is it, that rests beneath the pall?

A rich man, renowned for wealth, and the virtue of wealth, and gone to Heaven over heaps of hoarded gold? A warrior rich in glory, and fragrant with blood? A Priest, high in the ranks of the Papal hierarchy, and venerable with eighty years of good deeds and grey hairs? No. It is none of these.

It is simply the corse of an unknown man, who has not a relative on the continent of America. Neither sister nor brother is there to weep by his grave. He was a man without money and without friends. He was drowned the other night, at the foot of Walnut street, in the Delaware. The Coroner gave him a grave in Potter's Field; and the Catholic Church of Saint John has taken the friendless stranger from his miserable grave, and given him a burial place among her graves. The priests of Saint John's are saying now a Midnight Mass over his corpse.

That is the mystery of this scene.

The congregation — gaze upon it well, and learn something of the power of the ceremonial of the Catholic Church. Here are men who, under the impulse of a No-Popery Riot, would fire a Church, or trail a Cross in the gutter. Now, they listen in silence, their faces wet with tears. Here are rude Irishmen, who, exiled from their native soil, by the curse of British Rule, find a home and freedom for their hearts and church, on the shores of the New World. They weep also, at the sight of the friendless dead man; that coffin clad in black, with a white Cross, gleaming from its very darkness, seems to speak of their Native Land, dead with British oppression, but with a hope gleaming on her dead bosom. Here, ranged along the aisles, are soldiers, whose gay apparel contrasts strangely with the gloom and solemnity of the scene. The dead man was a soldier, and he is buried with all the honors of a soldier's funeral.

And the Mass goes on, and the Organ rises as with the glad shout of a soul, which bursting the walls of earth, catches the first glimpse of Heaven; and the voices of men and wo-

men peal forth one of those solemn hymns with which the Catholic Church has buried its dead for sixteen hundred years.

It is a sad, an awful, and yet a beautiful scene.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THIRD.

"FATHER JOHN."

Let us at this moment, amid the thousand faces of the Church, select a solitary one, as the object of a careful and searching glance.

Near the altar, with head gently bowed stands a slender figure, dressed in a single-breasted frock coat, of dark cloth, and reaching from the throat, enveloped in a white cravat, to the knees. The man may have endured some thirty years of life. A black silken cap, fits to the crown of his head, like a second skin, and throws his features boldly into the light. As he stands like a statue near the coffin, holding his hat in his joined hands, you may discern his features. The forehead is neither remarkable for height nor breadth; the eyes are small, and sunken deep beneath the brows; the mouth is large, with thick lips, and the chin, pointed and prominent, terminates a lower jaw remarkable for its heavy outline. The ears of his head lay straight and ruddy against the black cap, and a few straggling hairs steal down upon the temples. As for the nose, it is neither snub nor aquiline; but seems a compound of both; aquiline as far as the bridge and snub at the end, with wide nostrils.

As you gaze upon this person, he looks like a Brother of the Society of the Jesuits; there is something in his dress and manner which indicates the Roman Priest. Yet why does he stand aloof — between the crowd and the altar — while his Brethren are ministering over the Dead? Meekly bowing his head, and clasping his hands, he listens with all his soul to the impressive ceremonial, while his eyes gradually sink deeper into their sockets.

"Friend, you tread on my toes," he says mildly — starting from a reverie, and placing his hand upon the shoulder of a person who has made his way along the aisle, and now stands puffing and blowing near the altar.

It is a boy, rudely clad, with matted hair straggling over his face, and with tattered jacket and trousers upon his bony form. He held

a cap in his red hand, and looked around the Church, his mouth wide open, and his eyes like saucers. It was Ralph, who in his search for a Priest had entered Saint John's.

"I didn't go to do it,"—Ralph, looked around him at Priests—boys clad in white—white candles around the coffin—and gloomy church tapestried with faces—while his face became grotesque from the very intensity of his amazement—"I didn't go to do it. No more I didn't."

"H-u-s-h! You will disturb the services of the Church," whispers the person in the Skull-cap, with an admonitory inclination of his head: "Be quiet, my child."

The gaze of Ralph was now transferred from the Church to the solitary individual. He surveyed him by the light of the wax candles, and from his skull-cap to his boots.

"You're one o' them priest-chaps—I guess," he whispered slowly, "aint you?"

"H-u-s-h! Do not make a noise," said the person in the Skull-cap, elevating his eyebrows, "Be quiet, my child."

Ralph, already awed by this scene—the Coffin draped in black—the children in white, swinging silver censers to and fro—the Organ wailing through the dead stillness—was hushed into silence by the authoritative manner of the reverend personage.

For some moments he stood perfectly still, scratching his head, and looking vacantly from side to side.

"I s-a-y," he whispered, drawing close to the gentleman in black, "If you're a Priest may be you know a man they call Father John?"

"What do you want with him?" was the answer, uttered in a low voice, and without a perceptible movement of the lips.

"To come an' pray with my mother, she's a dyin' and wants a rale Priest," replied Ralph, in one breath, without pausing for a single stop.

The person in the Skull-cap surveyed Ralph from head to foot.

"What is the name of your mother?"

"Jones, Mrs. Jones, an' she lives in Bonus Court, Number Two, up stairs."

"Bonus Court," echoed the gentleman, "how far is that from here?"

In a hurried whisper, Ralph described the

location of his mother's residence. The gentleman in dark attire bent nearer and nearer to the ragged boy, while his face assumed a saddened and painful look.

"I will come," he whispered—"go out of the Church. I will join you at the door. Quick! Your mother may die without confession or sacrament."

"You?" whispered Ralph, "You—you don't mean to say——"

"My name is John Augustin. They call me Father John. I am a Priest of this Church. Go, my child."

Ralph, with a wondering stare, parted from the Priest, and crumbling his cap in his bony hands, began to force his way through the crowded aisle. He encountered many frowns, some hard words, and a harder tap from the hand of a Soldier, as he pushed along.

"You kin strike a feller as has come to git a priest to pray with his mother—kin you?" and urged his way towards the door. Once, or twice, he looked back and saw the children in white garments around the coffin; and the light of the waxen candles streamed over his hard, rugged face, and showed the tears which dimmed his eyes.

Presently he stood in the moonlight in front of the Church, leaning against the railing, as he impatiently awaited the appearance of the Priest. The night was bitter cold, and Ralph, in his thin attire, had a hard time of it to keep his blood in circulation. He stamped his feet upon the ice which covered the pavement, and beat his chest with his hands, and at last—although the heart of the young ruffian was full, and his eyes wet with tears—began to dance up and down, from the gutter to the railing, and back again.

The moon shone from the cloudless sky over the lofty towers of Saint John's, while the Organ wailed its funeral chaunt through the unclosed door.

"I wonder why he don't come," said Ralph, dancing away with more power than grace: "To keep a feller a'waitin' here in this cold, when his mother's a-dyin.' But them Preacher chaps don't keer I guess for sich as us. No they don't. I wonders how I could get to be a Priest or Preacher, or somthin' o' that sort?"

Ralph did not utter another word in front of Saint John's. His mouth was suddenly closed,

his eyes were darkened, he was dragged rudely along the pavement; he heard a sharp sound like the closing of a carriage door, and then the rolling of wheels over the rough stones of the public street.

His eyes were closed, but not his ears——

"Got him?" said a voice, which evidently came through a window from the driver's box.

"Safe enough," replied a voice very near Ralph, a voice deep and hurried, "no mistake about it. Drive on, and don't stop till I tap at the window. I'll tell you when we get there."

And the carriage rattled over the street.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOURTH.

WHAT BECAME OF RALPH.

As the carriage rattled along the street, Ralph with his mouth closed and his eyes darkened, attempted to move his arms, while he began to recover slowly from the stupor with which this incident had benumbed his faculties. He attempted to move his arms, but discovered to his cost, that they were tied behind his back. He next tried to speak, but his mouth was effectually closed. As for his eyes, they were wrapt in impenetrable darkness; the bandage which encircled his head, pressed upon the eye-balls with a tight and painful sensation.

The thoughts of the kidnapped boy, became vague and almost delirious. He could not persuade himself that he was awake. He heard the rattling of the carriage wheels, and at the same time, even with his bandaged eyes, saw his Mother's face starting up from the ragged coverlet of her dying bed, and gazing upon him with eyes blighted by the pestilence. The rattling of the carriage wheels, and that vision of his Mother's face, were but portions of some frightful dream—so Ralph thought to himself—and he would soon awake and find himself sleeping on his ragged bed, in Bonus Court.

However, he resolved to put his doubts to rest, by a trifling but satisfactory experiment. His legs were free, and he began to kick freely about him, on every side.

"You little cuss!" growled an angry voice, "Do that agin, and ther'll be some chokin' done in this 'ere cab. You'd better mind who you kick, you young jail-bird."

Ralph quite delighted to discover that he was awake, and was not in a dream, continued to apply his feet on either side, with great rapidity. He was answered by an "Ouch!" and a curse, accompanied by an energetic application of an unknown hand to the side of his head.

"I'll make you see stars, jail-bird, I will," said the voice: "There's a bandage 'round your eyes, and a plaster on your mouth, and a bit of rope fastened by a stick, about your wrists. Do you hear?" the voice bellowed in his ear, in tones which were audible above the rattling of the carriage wheels. "Now kick me agin and I'll make you wish a hoss had kicked you."

This was at once complimentary and consoling. Ralph held—not his tongue, for that was useless—but his feet and kicked no more. The carriage rattled on. It seemed to turn a great many corners, go over a great many gutters, and once or twice stopped suddenly, and turned directly round. Ralph could form no idea of the part of the city, or the names of the streets, which the carriage traversed.

After fifteen minutes—which seemed an eternity to the kidnapped boy—the carriage halted for the last time, and the voices of the man on the box and the man inside, mingled in a hurried conversation.

"Shill we take him out?" said the man on the box.

"We *shill*," emphatically remarked the man inside. The carriage door was thrown open. Ralph heard the crash of its opening, and a tremor—was it cold or terror?—permeated his limbs. There was not much time for thought, however, for a pair of hands grasped him by the feet, and another pair by the shoulders, and he was rapidly borne through the carriage door. He felt the cold air of the winter night upon his cheeks for a moment, and then was hurried into an atmosphere dense and stifling with many smells—all far from pleasant—and all imbued with tobacco smoke.

"Ar' they a-goin' to murder me?" thought Ralph as he was hurried along.

There came a blast of cold air again, and Ralph felt that his invisible captors were descending a stairway. In short, after many changes in the temperature of the atmosphere

—after traversing three level passages or rooms, and descending three stairways, Ralph was forced into a chair, the bandage taken from his eyes, and the plaster torn from his mouth.

"Now what do you think o' yourself to go and break your father's heart in this 'ere way?" said a voice—the same voice which Ralph had heard in the cab.

The captured boy looked about him with a wild and wondering glance.

He was seated in an arm chair, before a large table, in the centre of which a candlestick was placed. The light of the candle shone dimly for a yard or more, around the table, while the rest of the place—room or cavern—was enveloped in darkness. Ralph saw the cracked ceiling above him, but the walls of the room were hidden from his view. Near the table stood a coal stove, blazing hot, which filled the place with an intolerable heat.

And opposite Ralph—on the other side of the table—sat a portly man very neatly attired in black, with a flaring red neckerchief around his apoplectic throat. His spotless shirt bosom glittered with a diamond breast-pin. His face, or rather that portion of his face which was visible, displayed a vast amount of lower jaw, and a wide expanse of cheeks, red as the neckerchief or the blazing stove. His forehead was concealed by a black silk handkerchief, bound tightly around the head, from the crown to the brows, and over one eye he wore an enormous patch, whose bright green was rather picturesquely contrasted with the scarlet of his cheeks.

And the hands of this gentleman, resting upon the table, presented two pistols toward the breast of Ralph, their polished barrels glistening brightly in the candle-light.

"You needn't trouble yourself to stir," said the portly gentleman, bending over the table: "The door is fast, and there's *help* on 'tother side. We're quite alone, and them critters is rewolvers."

Ralph did not utter a word.

His face, with the tangled hair hanging over the brows, was very pale, but its lineaments were hard and rigid, as with the impulse of a sudden thought, or the apathy of settled despair. His grey eyes roved incessantly from the green patch to the pistols, from the pistols to the cracked ceiling, and from the ceiling toward the

coal stove, and the thick darkness which lay beyond it. Yet he did not utter a word. He rubbed his wrists—which exhibited still the red marks of the cord, and wiped away the traces of the plaster from his mouth, and then resting his elbows on the table, and his cheeks between his hands, gazed steadily into the only visible eye of the mysterious personage. It was a great sleepy eye, protruding from heavy lids, and resembling the visual orb of a broiled fish, rather than the eye of a human being.

Truth to tell the gentleman was somewhat discomposed by the steady stare of Ralph.

"You kin look, an' take your fill in lookin' young gallows-bird," he remarked. "But that won't save you from the Pennytensherry."

Ralph started at the word, '*Penitentiary*' but did not uncloset his lips.

"Pennytensherry, yes I said it," continued the gentleman of the Green-Patch, "You'll go there sartin' shure, before you're an hour older. Don't ye know me, you scoundrel?"

Ralph did not speak. His stolid silence seemed to ruffle the equanimity of the portly gentleman.

"Don't ye know me?" he cried, rattling his pistols against the table.

Ralph did not answer. He seemed to be engaged in a sort of metaphysical reverie, in regard to the Green Patch which covered the portly gentleman's eye.

"There's my card, young Moyamensin," continued Green Patch applying the name of a popular jail to the Boy: "Now do ye know me?"

Ralph gazed intently upon the card, which had been flung across the table, and which now rested between his elbows, and managed with great difficulty to "spell out" the following inscription:

STEWEL PIDGEON, ESQ.

Especial P. O.

"Stewel Pydgeon, Esq-u-i-r-e, *es-pecial Polceese offis-ser*!" repeated the portly gentleman by way of translating the card. Still the ruffian boy preserved a sullen silence.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIFTH.

HOW RALPH DISCOVERED THAT HE WAS SOMEBODY ELSE.

"What d'ye mean a starin' that a-way, and not sayin' a word, when you've broke the heart

of your poor father by your carryin's on! Say!"

Yet even this appeal, so eloquently expressed and accompanied by a fierce rattling of revolvers against the table, did not rouse the sullen Ralph into speech.

"To go and leave your father's house and jine yearself to a gang of counterfeiters! Why it's enough to make a man tear his hair from his head for the depravity o' human natur'—" and Stewel lifted one eye to the cracked ceiling, with a look which was intended for an expression of pious horror.

"Counterfeiters!" cried Ralph—speaking for the first time.

"The prope'ty was found on you, young man. It's a Pennytennshery offense. You'll go before the Sessions to-morrow, and in a few days they'll shave your head at Cherry Hill. Never had your head shaved, had you?"

"Never," responded Ralph. "How does it feel?" and then a sign of latent laughter passed rapidly over his compressed features.

"You needn't grin. There's no jokin' with an affair like this. *Sarch your pockets, young man.*"

In compliance with this request, Ralph inserted his hands into the pockets of his ragged round-a-bout—chuckling to himself at the idea—and in an instant drew forth from each pocket a dingy package, which he laid upon the table.

"Hello! What's this!" he shouted in dismay, as he unrolled the dingy package: "Bank Notes, by the livin' Jingo! Tens and twenties and fifties! I say, Mr. Green Patch, this is cuttin' it a leedle too fat! You don't mean to say that these notes belong to me?"

Bending over the table, he extended his bony hands, and fluttered in the candle-light a tempting display of Bank Notes.

"It won't do. You can't come it over me. You've been connected with the gang of counterfeiters, and the prope'ty's found on you. To-night you'll sleep in Moyamensing."

Stewel Pydgeon, Esq. was emphatic. His one eye winked knowingly, and at every word he clanked the pistols on the table. Ralph gazed on the Notes, and then at the Green Patch, with a puzzled look.—

"What might my name be?" he asked.

"Come—come, that's a little *too* rich!"

responded Stewel. "You know that you are the son of one of our most respectable merchants. You've deserted the family harth, and run with the Injine, and got into bad company, and here's the consikence! Charles Augustas Williken, little did your poor father ever think you'd ever come to this!"

Ralph dropped the notes, sank back on the chair, and began to scratch his head, fixing his eyes upon a particular spot in the ceiling. In that moment a singular idea flitted over the brain of the ruffian boy. When he again rested his elbows upon the table and confronted the portly Stewel, his face was distorted by an expression of grief.

"U-oo-oo!" he sobbed. "I'm very sorry, I am, for what I've done; but I didn't guess that I'd be found out, and if you please, good Mister Pydgeon, don't take me to jail, and break my poor father's heart!"

The virtuous Stewel was somewhat affected by the violent grief of the poor boy.

"On won condition," he exclaimed. "Won condition, my child."

"Wot is it?" mumbled Ralph. "I'll do anythin' to get off"—and covering his face with his hands, he sobbed bitterly.

"Can you fight?"

"Some," replied Ralph, extending his fists toward the light.

"Would be afeard of ten men in a dark room?"

"Not if there was twenty, and I had a couple o' th' Fairy boys with me," said Ralph, wiping the tears from his eyes: "Hows'ever, one of the Fairy boys is ekel to twenty fellers, at any time—in a dark room, or at the corner of Third and Dock, of a Sunday afternoon. Why you ought to see us in a regular muss! Get out! Don't we make the fur fly!"

"And you will do just as I tell you, if I promise to let you off?"

"Say the word, and I'm your man," answered Ralph.

"Suppose I take you from this place, an' lead you up a dark stairs, an' put you in a dark room, in a dark closet——" Stewel paused.

"Y-e-s," murmured Ralph, becoming deeply interested.

"And suppose while you're a-hidin' in the dark closet, ten of your cronies, mind ye,



"AND THE MAN WITH THE MASK, FOLDING HIS ARMS, AND STANDING BETWEEN THE LIGHT AND THE SOFA, GAZED UPON THE PROSTRATE FORM WITH DOWNDRAWN BROWS."—See p. 81.

comes into the room, and begins to rob the premises —”

• “My cronies?” muttered Ralph.

“Your cronies. Part of your gang. You know what I mean. Don’t purtend to gammon me. Don’t I know you? Pooh!”

Here Stewel’s one eye winked in violent derision of the idea, that *he* did not know Ralph and all his gang.

“Of course you *do*,” cried Ralph, “If you did’nt know me you could’nt a-found me out. My eyes! What a reg’lar old possum you are! To go and find me out in this style!”

“Well, suppose ten of your cronies comes into that room, and breaks open a desk, and —”

“Y-e-s —”

“Takes out of that desk a small tin box filled with valleyable papers —”

“Y-e-e-s —”

“Do you think you have the pluck to raise a thunderin’ hullabaloo just as they are about to tordle off with that tin box?”

“What shall hinder me? Did you ever hear me holler!”

And without another word, Ralph filled the gloomy place with a most unearthly yell, which bore a vivid resemblance to an Indian war-whoop. Making an extemporaneous trumpet with his hands, he commanded an imaginary engine to give way — to man the rope — to let her drive — with other expressions of a similar lively character.

“There,” he said, as he panted for breath, “that’s the way US Fairy fellers does our work. O-oo-a-h!”

“Do you want to split me ears, ye young Injin?” expostulated Stewel — “jist stop that noise, or I’ll maul your head, I will. It’s very easy to holler at an injine now, but can you holler in a dark room, where ten desperate fellers — of your gang, mind ye — is waitin’ to cut your throat? Have you the pluck?”

“Jist try me,” answered Ralph, and he murmured to himself, “*a small tin box filled with valleyable papers.*”

“And you’ll do jist as I say,” exclaimed Stewel, “if I promise to leave you go? You’ll go to the room, hide in the closet, wait for these friends of your’n and seterey?”

“Won’t I?” cried Ralph. “But how fur off is this house, where the robbery’s a-goin’ to be did?”

“That’s tellin’, my young Moyamensin’,” responded Stewel: “Jist say the word, and we’ll start.”

Ralph cast his eyes toward the pistols, and his countenance was darkened by a sudden gloom.

“Never mind the rewolwers,” suggested Stewel: “they’re loaded, but you can’t get ’em. The Poleese always carries the rewolwers — I prefers slung shot as they have in New York, by order of the Ma’or — but here they only allow us rewolwers and maces and darbies.”

“Where am I now,” asked Ralph, rather disconcerted by the composure of the Police Officer — “In Southwark or in Kensington?”

“Do you see anythin’ green in my eye? Do you spose I’m a-goin’ to tell you *that* arter takin’ so much trouble to git you here? No sir-e-e! Blindfold you came here, and blindfold you’ll go away. If you’re ready say the word.”

Ralph was impressed with an involuntary fear, as he saw the Police Officer rise from the chair, and approach him with a pistol in one hand and a black kerchief in the other.

“Blindfold as much as you like, old chap, but don’t put any stickin’ plasters over my mouth — them things is so nasty.”

“If you’ll promise to make no whisper of a noise I’ll not fix your mouth; but mind ye — the first loud word from you and our bargain’s up, and you sleep in Moyamensin’ prissen. D’ye hear?”

Ralph nodded, and Stewel proceeded to tie the black neckerchief around the head and over the eyes of the young ruffian. Another movement, and his wrists were secured by the cord and the stick, which served instead of a pair of manacles.

“You seem to have a purty stout set o’ nerves, any how,” exclaimed Stewel. “Many’s the forger and murderer I’ve tied in this way, and did n’t they shake? Don’t mention it!”

“I’m to get off clear if I do as you say?” muttered the blindfolded Ralph.

“You have the word of Stewel Pydgeon,” answered the Police Officer, with a gravity becoming his station. “Are you ready?”

“Aye, aye,” whispered Ralph, and he was lead from the Place — room or cavern or cellar, as you choose to call it — and after many ascents and descents, and sudden changes of

the temperature, he felt himself in the cold winter atmosphere again, as the sharp closing of a door resounded at his back.

"Got him?" said a voice — it was the voice of the cab-driver.

"Aye, aye," replied Stewel, and Ralph was gently urged into the cab, or carriage, and presently the wheels were rattling on their way once more.

"How d'ye feel?" asked Stewel, who sat by his side.

"Fine as a fiddle!" laughed Ralph, adding to himself, in a voice which was drowned by the uproar of the wheels — "*Charles Augustus Williken, aint you a bad boy to go and break your poor rich father's heart!*"

And Ralph chuckled merrily to himself, as the carriage whirled along, although a tear now and then stole from beneath his bandage as he thought of his dying mother.

"Never mind," he murmured, "Father John's a-prayin' with her, and Fanny's by her bed, not mentionin' the Millerite's daughter."

After traversing at least two miles of the streets — paved with large and uneven stones — the carriage entered upon a road smooth and level as a floor.

"In the country, are we old hoss?" asked Ralph.

"Never you mind; we'll be *there* soon enough was the gruff reply.

Soon however the carriage turned, and rattled once more over the paving stones, and as it seemed to Ralph was driven rapidly into the heart of the city. After some twenty minutes it stopped suddenly, made an abrupt turn, and the wheels crushed on, over snow and ice.

"We are there," whispered Stewel. "Get out, and follow me, and don't make a noise if you valley your brains."

The carriage door was opened. Ralph felt the hand of Stewel upon his arm. He was led from the carriage over ice and snow — he heard a quick sound like the opening of a gate — and then was urged onward, by the hand of Stewel, his chilled feet sinking ankle-deep at every step.

"Here's three steps — take keer," whispered Stewel, and Ralph felt his foot upon a marble

step. He counted three steps and then heard the grating of a key in a lock.

"Come on," whispered Stewel. And at the same instant Ralph led forward, felt a delightful change from the cold winter air, to a temperature at once warm and comfortable. He trod upon a carpet; there was no longer ice and snow beneath his feet.

"I'm in somebody's entry," he muttered.

"Take hold of the railin' and come up stairs; or stay your hands are tied. Tread keerful, and don't make a noise. That's your sort, my boy."

Stewel placing himself behind Ralph was urging him slowly and cautiously up a carpeted stairway. Ralph, whose heart began to beat violently against his chest, counted nineteen steps, and then was lifted off his feet and grasped in the arms of the Police Officer.

"Not a word" whispered Stewel; "You're a purty big load but I kin carry you. Remember your promise. Make a whisper and you sleep in Moyamensin'."

Ralph's teeth began to chatter; his heart thumbed against his tattered jacket; for the first time he felt afraid.

He was borne onward by the steady arms of Stewel, for the space of some two or three minutes, and then placed on his feet again. A door opened before him; he was urged over the threshold; he heard it close behind him.

"This is the room," said Stewel in a hoarse whisper, "I'll leave you now. Don't you remove the bandage from your eyes until you count a-hundred. D'ye hear?"

"Y-e-s," faltered Ralph who trembled from head to foot.

"Mind what I say, young gallows-bird. When you've counted a hundred, get into the closet which is opposite to the desk. Wait there until them ten *cracksmen* appear, and open the desk and get hold of the tin box. There's a glass door in the closet and you can see all their operations. When they get the tin box, do you —"

"Holler like thunder," interrupted Ralph.

"Percisely," replied Stewel. "And now my boy I leave you — the rope and the stick is off your neck, — them chaps'll be here afore a quarter of an hour. It's most time now."

Ralph heard a footstep followed by the sound of a door stealthily closed.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIXTH.

WHAT RALPH SAW AND HEARD IN THE SMALL CHAMBER.

With a shudder he listened to another sound
 —the noise of a key turning the lock.

Then all was breathlessly still.

"One two three five six ten eleven twenty," counted Ralph — with an admirable defiance not only of punctuation but also of the commonly received rules of arithmetic—"Forty forty one fifty sixty a-hund-e-r-d!"

Panting for breath Ralph tore the black kerchief from his brows and examined the scene, into which he had been so curiously ushered, with an eager and hurried look.

"My hands are free anyhow," he soliloquized — "That's somethin' for you, Mister Charles Augustus Williken." And Ralph indulged in a quiet fit of laughter.

Yet his laughter soon died away. He stood enveloped by utter darkness. There was not a ray of light to reveal a single feature of the place. The room was warmed by invisible means, and therefore neither stove nor grate flung even the faintest glimmer of light, into the dense gloom.

Ralph began to tremble. The darkness made him afraid. The sound of the key turning in the lock, added to his terror. Extending his hands, he began to *feel* his way through the darkness, and thus cautiously examined the details of the room.

It was a narrow place, not more than twelve feet square. At one side stood a desk, made of some smooth wood, which Ralph examined with hands chilled by cold, or fear. In the opposite wall stood the closet door; Ralph felt the glass window, inserted in its panels near the top.

The floor was covered with a thick carpet. There was neither chair, table nor any kind of furniture in this narrow room, or perhaps closet would be the more appropriate term.

This examination over, Ralph stood trembling in the darkness, at once confused by the events of the past hour, and full of doubt and fear for the events of the future part of the Night.

"A nice little kooby hole to murder a feller in, or my name is Charles Augustus Williken and is not Jonesey the B'iler!" he soliloquized:

"And ten of my gang is coming to rob the house — my gang! Crikey! Never knew I had a gang afore, 'cept the Fairy boys, and them's the chaps as don't steel. Now I'd just give a pewter leven-penny-bit if I was out of this scrape, and safe home in Bonus Court again!"

Ralph felt his way through the dark, and laid his hand upon the knob of the door.

"Locked! Regularly locked!" he exclaimed. "Hello! This is not the same door which I felt a moment ago: there must be two doors to this 'ere room."

The discovery completed the terror and wonderment of the young ruffian.

And yet surrounded as he was by darkness and mystery, the Idea which had entered his brain an hour before, and induced him to submit blindly to the commands of Stewel Pydgeon, did not desert him now.

"I'm a poor devil, and nobody keers for me. That's a fact. If anybody murders me, or gives me a knock aside o' the head, why let 'em do it. But if I do get out o' this scrape I'll make somethin' by it, by the livin' Hoky!"

The Living Hoky was a mythological personage, often mentioned in the oaths of Ralph's comrades—"de boys what runs wid de Fairy."

Ralph was suddenly startled from his meditations by a new wonder. He heard the sound of a key turning in a lock—a low, scarce perceptible, yet grating sound—which made the blood run cold in his veins.

"Them fellers is come," he muttered, and searched hurriedly for the closet door. It was soon encountered by his extended hands. Sliding into the recess which the door concealed, Ralph felt a bright light flash through the glass window into his face.

That light illumined the room, and showed the rich colors of the carpet, and the polished mahogany surface of the Desk, within whose recesses the tin box was concealed. The wall against which the desk was placed glared with the vivid colors of a tropical landscape, where tigers, negroes, and elephants were grouped together in admirable confusion, and with a world of bright green leaves and large fresh flowers all around them.

Ralph had not much time to examine the landscape, wonderful as it seemed to him, for

as the light flashed over the room, he noticed with a quick throb under his ragged jacket, that the keys of the desk dangled beneath its polished mahogany lids.

"That's somethin'," he muttered to himself.

But the light grew brighter, and a low footstep was heard. Ralph held his breath and pressed his face against the glass door of the closet. In this position he could only see that portion of the room which lay between the Closet and the Desk, and this space, not more than a yard in width, was now enlivened by a vivid light.

This space soon became the stage on which was enacted a wonderful, yes, an incredible scene.

Let us describe it, as it appeared to the eyes of Ralph.

The sound of the footsteps became more distinct, and a Man dressed in black came stepping slowly backward, until he stood between the gaze of Ralph and the desk. The light shone over his face, and cast his shadow on the floor, but it was not carried by him. His form dilated until he seemed at least six feet in height, and every sinew seemed to quiver with powerful emotion. In one hand he grasped a Golden Cup — the other hand, outstretched, with the fingers extended, seemed to beckon to some unknown person to approach.

The face of the Man was calm and smiling. It was surmounted by curling brown hair, which rested in wavy masses upon the dead white forehead. Indeed, this face chilled the wondering Ralph with fear — a crawling and indefinable dread. For although the cheeks were red, and the lips smiling, and the eyebrows boldly pencilled, yet the face resembled the visage of a dead man. The features were fixed; the smile was immovable; the eyes did not wink nor move from side to side, but were turned to the light with a cold and glass-like lustre.

"It's a ghost," thought Ralph, and he pressed his face against the window until his nose was flattened upon the cold glass.

The Man stood fearfully still. Ralph could survey him with ease, and from head to foot. The dark frock coat which he wore was buttoned to the throat; his attire was fashionable in its style, and developed the outline of a lithe and graceful form, which now was swelled

beyond its proportions by an indescribable emotion.

This fashionable attire was in strange contrast with the immovable face, with its perpetual smile and fixed eyes.

And while the Golden Cup was in one hand the Man waved the other slowly over his head, and described a circle in the air.

And then Ralph beheld a slighter figure move slowly forward, with slow and difficult steps, until it stood face to face with the Man in the dark attire.

Was it the figure of a man or woman?

Ralph could not determine."

For there was a cloak — a Spanish mantle — thrown over the head of the Second Figure, and its folds concealed the features and the form from the gaze of the bewildered boy. From the folds of this cloak a small white hand was extended. This hand grasped a candlestick of silver, in which was placed the waxen candle whose rays illumined both forms — here, the Man with the dead face and fixed eyes; there, the slighter Form, buried in the folds of the Spanish mantle.

"It's another ghost!" muttered Ralph.

And Ralph beheld the Man slowly *take off his Face*, as though it were but an article of wearing apparel.

In other words, he removed the Mask which he wore, and stood over the cloaked figure — an infernal triumph darkening over his countenance.

And then Ralph, with hushed breath and throbbing heart, witnessed the sequel of the scene —

And the light extended by the white hand shone vividly into the Dead Face with its glaring eyes and perpetual smile, and cast its shadow upon the Living Face, now agitated by an almost fiendish joy.

"Will you follow me?" whispered the Man with the Mask.

Ralph listened eagerly for the voice of the Cloaked Figure. There was no reply in words. But a low moan, indicative of mental suffering, came through the folds of the cloak, and the Figure, which was veiled by its dark folds, sank prostrate at the feet of the Man with the Mask.

"The candlestick don't tremble a bit," said Ralph to himself, as he saw the marble-like

hand extending the candle without the least perceptible tremor.

Then the Man buried the mask in his bosom, and placed the Golden Cup upon the desk, and after the lapse of a moment, stood over the Cloaked Figure, his eyes flashing with a dazzling lustre.

Ralph saw his right hand describe a circle in the air, while his lips moved, and his eyes dilated in their sockets.

"Are you willing to obey me?"—again the low, distinct voice was heard.

And again it was answered by a scarcely audible moan.

"Do you feel that your will is subject to mine?"

The head of the Cloaked Figure drooped slowly, as if in indication of assent.

"Do you feel that you cannot speak, turn, move, save with my consent?" asked the Man with the Mask, as he bent over the prostrate figure. "If your answer is Yes! then raise the light."

The candlestick was slowly lifted by the marble-like hand.

No words can describe the smile which agitated the lips of the speaker. His cheek was suddenly flushed, his eyes grew brighter, and again he described a circle in the air, with his right hand.

"A di'mond on his finger," thought Ralph—"It's a beauty of a hand he has—for a man—though the hand o' the tother is whiter by half."

To the utter horror of Ralph, the Man with the Mask cast his eyes towards the closet and advanced a step.

"He sees me! The jig's up!" muttered Ralph.

He clenched his fists, and nerved to desperation by his very fears, resolved to spring upon the Man, at the very moment when he attempted to open the closet door. The Man advanced, fixing his eyes upon the very glass through which Ralph was gazing.

The heart of the boy beat quicker; with clenched hands and deep-drawn breath, he stood prepared for the issue of the scene.

"A queer thought struck me," said the Man with the Mask, while his features were agitated by a smile: "some one may be concealed

within this closet. I do not like the looks of that glass window."

Another step he advanced; his hand was on the door.

"All is up," thought Ralph—"Now for't!"

"But 'tis only an idle fancy after all," said the Man—how distinctly his voice came to the listener's ears! "There is no one concealed within the closet."

He turned away, and Ralph saw him pause once more in the centre of the carpet, and confront the kneeling figure. Once more the diamond ring glittered on his finger, as his hand described a circle over the head of the prostrate form.

"Come!" said the Man with the Mask. Ralph saw him step backward, and in an instant he had passed out of view.

Then the kneeling figure rose. Holding the light above its head, it passed onward with a gliding step—that to the excited fancy of Ralph—did not seem to touch the floor. The cloak waved in graceful folds around its outlines, as it glided along, but Ralph could not discover whether that garment concealed the form of a man or a woman.

"I think it's a boy 'bout my own age, though a heap more delicate"—murmured Ralph, as the Cloaked Figure passed from his sight.

He saw its shadow upon the space of carpet which extended from the closet to the desk, but that was all.

He listened while a superstitious awe gathered in his veins. His blood was chilled. He could hear the beating of his heart.

They—the Man with the Mask and the Cloaked Form, whose white hand held the light—were passing away, like images of a dream.

"Shill I open the closet door?" thought Ralph, and for a moment he was agitated alternately by hesitation and resolve: "If I open it he may see me. If I don't, I'll lose the chance of knowing what it all means."

A world of fancies flashed through his brain in a moment. He heard the opening of a door, and heard the voice of the Man whispering—"Come!"

Ralph's hesitation was at an end. Cautiously unclosing the door, he gazed through the aperture and beheld—the two Figures passing over the threshold, into another and larger

chamber? No. As he unclosed the door all was darkness again. The figures had passed away, the door was closed, the light had vanished. He was once more alone.

Trembling from head to foot, Ralph crept from the closet, and stood listening, while his coarse shoes pressed on the thick carpet of the small chamber. All the Ghost stories he had ever heard, came suddenly upon him.

"I'll be dogged if it was a livin' man," he muttered, in his peculiar phraseology: "It was a spook and that's a fac'. This here house is haunted."

The Idea which had induced the boy to follow blindly the directions of Stewel Pydgeon, was completely forgotten in the whirl of his doubts and fears.

"I'm alone in a haunted house, I am, and there'll be all sorts of fiery devils rattlin' chains after me, afore I can say Jack Robinson! Oh, Stewel Pydgeon—Oh, Stewel! If I on'y had you in a lot, with a high board fence all around us, maybe I would'nt maul you some! I *guess* I would." These words were accompanied by several pugilistic displays, which were lost to the world, in the gloom of that chamber.

Ralph advanced in the darkness, spreading forth his hands. All was deathly still. There was not the echo of the slightest sound to disturb the profound stillness.

"Which door did they go out of?" he muttered—"That is if they went out at all. Ghosts ginerally takes some underhanded way o' doin' business, and makes a dive through the floor or up the chimbley. There aint no chimbley here. That's won consolation."

How long Ralph stood wondering and trembling in that dark room, it is beyond our power to determine.

If time is properly measured by thoughts rather than by moments, he stood there, perfectly motionless for at least an hour. But if it is possible for a whole year of thinking to take place in the brain of an "Injine Boy" within the compass of a few moments, we must come to the conclusion that only five minutes o' th' clock passed away, while Ralph stood like a statue in the centre of the dark room.

At length he seemed to recover his self-possession.

"If it's a ghost, why then it *is*. I'd like to know what a ghost would want to do with a poor creatur' like me? If it aint a ghost, why then it aint."

Having settled his mind with regard to this interesting question, Ralph was suddenly seized again with the Idea, which had entered his brain while listening to the respectable Pydgeon.

"The keys is in the lock," he said, and *felt* and anxiously for the desk: "If my gang don't come soon, I'm afeer'd they'll come too late."

The desk met his extended hand. In a moment the keys were in his fingers. It required some time to learn the "trick" of the lock, but Ralph was cool and cautious once more. He worked away steadily in the darkness, determined to learn the mystery of that lock and of those keys, before he left the chamber. But while he was most deeply absorbed in this occupation, he was disturbed by a sound—like the echo of an approaching step.

"Hello! My gang's comin'—" and Ralph succeeded in turning the key in the lock, as the sound of footsteps grew more distinct. "*A tin box with very valleyable papers*—" he muttered, and the lid of the desk rose with the impulse of his arm.

The sound of footsteps—gliding over thick carpets, and very dim and stealthy—was now mingled with the whispers of a subdued voice.

"Now or never," thought Ralph, and placing one hand beneath the lid, he searched for the "tin box," which had formed such an essential feature of Stewel's discourse.

It encountered his grasp. He drew it from a recess something like those which are known to lawyers under the general name of "pigeon hole." He was somewhat astonished at its weight. But the steps and the whispers grew more distinct; clasping the box to his side with one arm, he gently dropped the lid, left the keys in the lock and retreated to the closet.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVENTH.

BLUE-JAY AND HUMMING BIRD.

Scarcely had he gained this retreat and placed his finger against a groove of the closet door, when a warm light streamed suddenly around the narrow room—over the desk, over the rich carpet, over the walls, adorned

with African Princes, palm trees, tigers, elephants and crocodiles.

"Now's the time to try a feller's pluck," was the elegant thought of Ralph, as he once more flattened his nose against the door. It was indeed the crisis of his fate; a crisis, full as interesting to the young ruffian as that great crisis which every year dissolves the Union, is to a celebrated Senator.

You may be certain that Ralph listened with all his ears.

The steps which disturbed the stillness were not all like the gentle footsteps of the two figures who had some moments previous occupied the soul of Ralph.

"Them's the boots of two heavy fellers," said Ralph—"Two o' th' biggest of the gang."

Nor does the light resemble the waxen candle which a few moments ago shone clearly around the place.

"It's a dark lantern! Now it comes, and now it goes. A-a-h!"

Ralph held his breath. Between the closet and the desk appeared two huge figures, clad in a coarse attire, and with their hats drawn over their brows. One was dressed in a long overcoat, resembling the fur of some wild animal, and copiously adorned with large white buttons. This personage held the dark lantern, whose rays did not illuminate his face, which was concealed by the collar of his overcoat, even to the very eyes.

The second, arrayed from head to foot in tatters—tattered round-a-bout, tattered trousers, and shoes and hat altogether venerable with many a kink and crevice—carried a bundle of keys in one hand, and grasped a crow-bar in the other.

The manner of these gentlemen was not altogether calm and self-possessed. They looked hurriedly around the room, as the first suffered the ray of the lantern to fall upon the desk, and their deep whispers were loud enough for the ears of Ralph.

"You must be quick about it, Hummin' Bird," said the ragged Round-a-bout—"You know what Stewel said? We must leave eight o' th' boys in th' basement, and only two of us go up into the room?"

"Well, Blue-jay my jewel, you needn't mind tellin' that over jist now," was the gruff response of the gentleman in the shaggy over-

coat: "Here's our work afore us, and we've got to do it."

Ralph thought to himself that he had never before seen such curious specimens of the feathered creation, as the Humming Bird and the Blue-jay, who now stood between his eyesight and the desk. Let not the uninitiated reader express any surprise at these poetical designations, which remind one of the highly imaginative titles of Indian Chiefs in aboriginal novels, or of the fanciful names of certain characters in the Arabian Nights. Anybody at all conversant with the reports of the Public Courts, can tell you that the Thief of the Quaker City delights in names of musical sound and poetical meaning. To rob under the name of John Smith, or to commit burglary under the name of John Jones would be altogether common and vulgar. Indeed, no one but a Bank Director, or something of that sort, is allowed to rob under his own proper name. Your professional Thief has a "soul above buttons." He delights in the poetry of epithet. He calls himself—not simple John, Isaac, or Timothy—but "Slippery Elm," "Easy Jimmy," "Squirrel Bot," "Bull-head Billy," or some name of similar lively and characteristic signification.

Thus the gentlemen before us—who certainly do not resemble any particular member or members of the feathered tribe—address one another by the select names of Humming Bird and Blue-jay.

"Hello! Keys in the lock," whispered Blue-jay; "Kin Stewel have played us false?"

"Sartainly *not*," responded Humming Bird, "It was his *plant* you know. He set it a-goin' hisself, and he's to git half the profits—"

"While we stand a chance o' gettin' the *Law* without the *Prophets*—eh? Hum!" whispered the other, chuckling quietly at this lamentable piece of wit.

Ralph watching the movements of these gentlemen through the closet window, saw at a glance that they were somewhat puzzled by the sight of the keys in the lock. He regretted that he had not locked the desk, and placed the keys in his pocket.

"This is makin' robbin' a leetle too easy—" he thought, or muttered: "Wonder what they'll say when they open the desk?"

At the word, Humming Bird held the light, while Blue-jay opened the desk.

"A tin box, in a pigeon hole—" said the former.

"—Sartin valleyable papers for which a large reward is sartin to be offered—" added the Blue-jay.

The lid slowly rose, while the light of the lantern revealed the interior of the desk. Ralph beheld a wide range of pigeon-holes filled with papers and letters, but there was one which was entirely vacant.

"There's the pigeon-hole, but where's the tin box?" whispered Blue-jay.

The eyes of Humming Bird lit up with sudden fire. He growled a blasphemous oath. His hand ran rapidly along the range of pigeon-holes.

"Jay," he muttered, in a voice which Ralph distinctly heard: "We're sold."

"Sold!" echoed the other.

"Reg'larly sold! This is a *plant* of Stewel's, not to get a tin box, but to get one of us. D'ye take? As we are creepin' out o' th' basement winder a whole Sheriff's possy will light upon us."

Blue-jay seemed to be much impressed with this view of the state of the case. He swore a fearful oath, and invoked all sorts of blindness upon his eyes, adding—

"It's time to tortle Hum—it is. What d'ye say? Had we better go down to the basement and give our boys notice, or git out o' this house some other way?"

The rays of the lantern flashed over the white coat of the Humming Bird, and revealed the small portion of his face which was visible between the collar of his coat and the rim of his hat.

He seemed involved in a maze of doubts. Blue-jay leaning one hand upon the unclosed desk, looked up into his comrade's eyes, with a glance that betrayed much anxiety and more suspense.

Ralph saw them distinctly.

"Now's the time for me to holler," he chuckled to himself—"To holler and raise the neighbors. Why do'n't you do it Jonesy? Get o-u-t!"

Ralph had an Idea of his own, which was entirely distinct from the plan laid down by

Stewel Pydgeon, Esq. It differed also, in many important respects from the plan adopted by Humming Bird and his friend. And Ralph with his face pressed against the thick glass, quietly watched the issue of the scene, while the tin box was under his left arm, and a finger of his right hand held fast the closet door.

"Kin they see me?" the thought flashed over him—"The glass is rather small and yet they're whisperin' and lookin' this way."

They were indeed whispering in tones which Ralph could not hear, and at the same time directing their attention to the closet, with glances which Ralph did not like.

"In the closet?"

"Likely. Wonder if it is locked?"

Ralph heard these words, and saw the huge Humming Bird make a deliberate though stealthy stride toward the closet. At the same moment he darkened the lantern. All was thick Night again. Ralph felt the cold sweat start from his forehead. To raise an outcry was to derange all his plans, and destroy his own Idea. To remain quiet and suffer the Humming Bird to discover him in the closet, with the tin box under his arm was to expose himself to the chances of a scuffle which might terminate in murder.

Ralph pressed his finger against the groove of one of the upper panels of the door, and endeavoured to hold it by this frail fastening. He heard the step of the Humming Bird—he felt that a hand was laid against the other side of the door.

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHTH.

RALPH IN THE CLOSET.

This was indeed the moment of trial.

"I'll raise a hulabaloo,"—the thought flashed over Ralph's mind, and the yell was on his lips, when he was arrested by the whispers of the Humming Bird.

"It's locked Jay. Hand us the crow-bar."

Ralph heard the foot-steps of the Blue-jay, as he crossed from the desk to the closet. And Ralph, very much like the Duke of Wellington at five o'clock in the evening of the Battle of Waterloo, wished "that he was somewhere else."

"Let's have a little light,"—whispered Blue-jay.

‘Bah! What d’ye want with a light now? Want to ’larm the family? I kin manage in the dark. Hold the lantern and gimme your keys.’

“There they are,”—Ralph heard the jingling of the keys.

It must be borne in mind that there was neither knob nor latch on the outer side of the door, and that it fitted into the frame, with as much nicety as though it were but a portion of the wall. Therefore the finger of Ralph, pressed against the groove of a panel of the inside, supplied sufficient force to resist the finger of the Humming Bird, applied to the exterior, which was perfectly smooth.

“They’re tryin’ the keys,” said Ralph to himself—“That ’un won’t do. Nor that ’un. Nor that ’un nayther.”

“Cuss the keys,” grumbled Humming Bird—“Lend us the crow-bar.”

Ralph heard the small iron bar rattle against the door and gave up the game for lost, when the voice of Blue-jay caught his ear.

“I hear steps,” he whispered. “There’s some one comin’ up stairs. Come over here, and let’s stand behind the door at the head of the stairs, and ——”

“Knock ’em the minit they try to enter the room!” interrupted Humming Bird. “Nuff Sed.”

Ralph caught the sound of their footsteps, as they moved stealthily toward the door which was on the *left* of the closet.

The Man with the Mask and the Cloaked Figure—such at least was the thought of Ralph—had disappeared through the door which was on the *right* of the closet.

These facts passed rapidly over the mind of Ralph, and his course was determined on the instant. It was the work of a moment to slip his tattered shoes from his feet. Then opening the closet door without a sound, he stole from the recess, and his bare feet pressed the thick carpet.

He made his way through the darkness toward the door on the right. But if that door should happen to be locked—Ralph shuddered at the idea.

Or, if the ray of the lantern should happen to expose his form before he reached the door—Ralph did not pause, but this thought was full as terrible as the former.

The door once reached, and he was safe.

Stepping on tip-toe, he passed from the closet, and directed his steps toward the door, as best he might in the darkness. Meanwhile he girded the tin box under his arm, determined to lose it only with his life.

“Don’t you hear some one in the room, Jay?”

“No, it’s outside. Comin’ up stairs. Hum?”

“I tell you it’s in the room——”

“Gi’ us a glim o’ th’ lantern there——”

Ralph stood spell-bound. A ray from the lantern, and he was lost.

“The lantern, I say. I swear there’s some ’un in the room.”

The ray of the lantern flashed over the room, over the form of the bare-footed Ralph, but it revealed the Door on the Right, which was within reach of his arm.

He did not pause to look back, but sprang forward, and caught the knob of the door. At the same moment the curses of the thieves resounded at his back.

Was the door locked? Ralph tried it, with a hand nerved by despair. It was not locked,—and the key was there. To seize the key, tear it from the lock, open the door and close it again, was not precisely the work of a moment. But Ralph accomplished it and locked the door at the very moment, when Humming Bird and Blue-jay were wrenching at the knob on the opposite side.

“Cuss away,” cried Ralph “I goes for my Idea-r!”

No time was to be lost if he wished to carry the Idea into action.

Ralph at a glance comprehended his situation.

He had entered an entry or passage which connected a wing of the mansion with the main building. It was warmly carpeted, and a statue stood in a recess, which was opposite a lofty window.

The moon shone through this window, and lighted up the cold features of the marble image.

Ralph distinctly saw the opposite extremity of the passage. It was altogether not more than twenty feet in length, and six feet in width.

Advancing to the window, Ralph saw the moon shining in a cloudless sky. Her beams

revealed the main building of this mysterious mansion, and enabled Ralph to survey three ranges of shutters, which were hermetically closed. At a glance he gathered something of a definite idea of the details of his situation.

The window looked to the south. On the left appeared the rear wall of the main building. Opposite, under the blue sky, the high walls of neighboring mansions. And below, shadowed by these walls, appeared a narrow yard, covered with snow.

"I am in the second story," soliloquized Ralph — "How shall I get down into the yard?"

This question seemed rather difficult to answer. He heard the rattling of the knob on the opposite side of the door, but the sound only made him gird the tin box to his side with a firmer grasp.

"I'll try my luck this way," he said and advanced toward the farther end of the passage. Here to his surprise, he was met not by a door but by a curtain which waved to and fro as though agitated by a gentle air. This curtain was divided into two parts by a ray of light which streamed through its centre, and glittered along the passage, until it was lost by the rays of the moon.

Ralph gently laid one hand upon the curtain — pushed it as gently aside — and shrouded by its folds, looked within or beyond.

The ray streamed over his face and revealed its every lineament, as the eyes of the boy expanded in their sockets, while his lips parted until his teeth were visible.

The scene which he beheld took from him, for the moment, all power of speech or motion. His body was concealed by the folds of the curtain. His face, glaring in the light which shone through the aperture, was stamped with a mortal fear.

Presently he crept cautiously away from the curtain and reached the window again, where the Statue bathed by the pure moonlight, glared with its fixed eyeballs, like a Ghost.

Ralph did not pause for a moment's thought. Completely terror-stricken by the sight beyond the curtain, he raised the window, which happily glided upward without a sound.

Was he about to leap from the window?

His grey eyes shone very large and bright

beneath his tangled hair, and his cheek was as pale as that of the marble image at his back.

"I'd like to get out o' this her place any how," he said, gazing into the yard below: "Git out I must arter that sight — yes — by hokey if I break a leg or mash my head a few."

Still he did not relax his embrace of the tin box.

A circumstance connected with the walls of the house, or rather the walls of the passage, which connected the wing with the main building, attracted his gaze.

The monotonous uniformity of the red bricks was relieved by lattice work, which extended from the pavement to the roof, and was evidently intended for the support of some vine — indeed the leafless limbs of a vine, were clinging to the white strips of the lattice, as the moonlight fell upon the wall.

These strips were very frail. They did not seem sufficiently strong to bear the weight of Ralph. The horizontal strips were in some cases attached to the upright ones, by a single nail. The vine itself not more than two inches in diameter, was seen winding over the lattice, from the pavement to the very window from which Ralph was gazing.

"All's quiet," soliloquized the boy: "I've got three minutes to get out o' the scrape. Here goes for my Idea-r or for a broken neck."

He clutched the tin box under his left arm. He crept stealthily from the window. Grasping the topmost strip of the lattice work, he began his perilous descent. Once he looked upward, and the moon shone over his face, shadowed to the eyes by his matted hair. His cheeks were colorless, his eyes unnaturally bright; the scene which he had beheld *beyond the curtain* impressed him with a creeping terror.

And the frail strips trembled as he grasped them one by one, and creaked and quivered as he placed his bare feet upon them. Still nerved by his terror as much as his hope, he continued his descent, until the window was at least five feet above his head.

You may be sure that the tin box, under his left arm, only made his descent more difficult and perilous. It impeded the movements of his left hand, and once in the attempt to hold it more firmly to his side, he was almost precipitated to the pavement.

At last he hung half way between the window and the pavement. Grasping the lattice with his right arm, he listened intently and looked below. A sound like the clanking of a bolt suddenly withdrawn, struck his ears.

"They're comin' from the basement story," was his thought, and at the same moment the lattice-work crashed from beneath his feet. He was suspended in the air—his only support the frail strip which he clutched with his right hand.

The strip began to shake with the unusual weight attached to it—there was a quick sound like the breaking of a nail—Ralph gave himself up for lost.

"A broken leg or a broken neck," he cried, "But still the child does'nt give up his Idea-an' his tin box!"

At the instant a light streamed from the door of the basement story, and illumined the shadows of the yard.

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINTH.

BEYOND THE CURTAIN.

We will leave Ralph to his fate, and look *beyond the curtain*, and see the sight which he beheld.

The silver candle-stick stood on a mantle-piece of black marble. The light of the waxen candle struggled with the shadows of a spacious apartment. The ceiling was lofty, the walls unbroken by a single window, and the wide floor, covered with a carpet whose bright colors glowed warmly in the candle-light.

The magnificence with which this room was furnished, had stricken Ralph with a speechless wonder. Chairs of red velvet, whose backs seemed made of solid gold; tables of marble, white as alabaster; sofas, cushioned like the chairs, with scarlet velvet, and like the chairs, framed in gold; mirrors reaching from the ceiling to the floor, with rich drapery clinging to their glittering frames—these were a part of the wonders which met the gaze of the astonished Ralph.

Then the lofty walls were hung with paintings, which, to his eye, did not seem mere images of paint and canvass, but living forms, animated by all the passions that can move the human heart.

And every mirror reflected the form of the

Man with the Mask, who stood with folded arms near the light—his back to the mantle, and his face to the Cloaked Figure, who reclined upon the velvet cushions of a sofa which was placed in the centre of the room.

The light shone vividly upon that dark form, reclining upon the scarlet cushion of the sofa.

Ralph could not see the face of this unknown personage, but a small hand was laid upon the cloak, and a small foot appeared beneath its folds.

Was it the figure of a boy, the delicate child of wealth, or the figure of a young and beautiful maiden?

The hand and foot, both bared to the light, were white and beautiful as new-fallen snow.

And the Man with the Mask, folding his arms, and standing between the light and the sofa, gazed upon the prostrate form with down-drawn brows. His face was in shadow, but Ralph saw clearly the expression of his features. It was smiling, it was triumphant, it was full of mocking laughter.

This was the sight which Ralph beheld at the moment when he gazed beyond the curtain.

But as he gazed, the Man with the Mask raised his hand in the light, and at the same moment the hand on the dark cloak was slowly uplifted. Then the lips of the Man with the Mask moved slowly, and the Cloaked Figure slowly rose and stood before him, with the dark cloak upon its face and limbs. It stood between him and the luxurious sofa, like a dumb effigy of Death, summoned from the grave, to mock with its presence, the voluptuous glitter of that lofty chamber.

And the Man with the Mask turned his face to the light. It was the sight of that face which had penetrated Ralph with a superstitious terror. As it appeared to him, one side bathed by the light, the other in deep shadow, it looked more unnatural and repulsive than the Mask which had concealed it some moments previous.

Was it the face of a young or an old man? Ralph could not determine. But every feature was in motion. From the lips to the brow every lineament seemed to struggle and writhe. The eyes, black, and intensely brilliant, projected until the white of each was visible. The brow was corrugated. The chin quivered. In short, the visage of this Man resembled the

face of a Madman, or a person who is seized with the first indications of an epileptic spasm.

And meanwhile the Cloaked Figure stood like an inanimate effigy—as motionless as the mantle on which the candle-stick was placed—between the Man with the Mask and the luxurious sofa.

Do you wonder that the scene struck Ralph with terror? He saw the vast and voluptuous chamber—he saw that Face writhing as with a madman's despair—he saw the Cloaked Figure stand so dumb and immovable—and his heart died within him.

Turning away, he sought to escape from this scene in the manner which we have recorded. We will now take up the scene in the chamber, at the very moment when Ralph started away from the curtain.

“Is there a God?”

These words were uttered by the Man with the Mask, in a voice which scarcely rose above a whisper. And yet every accent seemed wrung from his lips against his will—yes, torn from him by an emotion which he battled with but could not master.

“Is there a God?” The words sounded with a strange emphasis, through the silence of the chamber.

The Man with the Mask laid his hand against the Mantle—he seemed to grow faint, and reach forth his arm, as if to prevent a sudden and violent fall to the floor.

“If there is no God, then why am I at this moment, seized with the reminiscences of twenty years? Why do faces that were buried long ago, stare at me, from the very darkness of the room? Why do words that were spoken long ago, by lips that have crumbled into dust these twenty years, now sound in my ears again? And at this moment of all others—when the world shut me out, I have retired to this quiet nook, determined to throw the Mask aside, and be *altogether myself* for an hour?”

The broken soliloquy of the Man, may well demand our earnest attention.

There are moments, when the best and the bravest, thus unbosom their hearts, but how shall we estimate the nature or the amount of the agony, which induced this singular man, to speak his involuntary thoughts in words. And of all words, these broken sentences which implied a Doubt in the existence of God?

All the while you will remember, the Cloaked Figure stood motionless before him.

“If there is a God, then my whole life is false. If there is a hereafter, then for twenty years, have I only been adding crime to crime, and heaping up wrath against wrath, against a Day of Judgment.”

These words mean more than they seem. Give them the accent with which they were spoken, give them the look which accompanied their utterance, and you will read their meaning—aye read the volume of Remorse which forced them from his lips.

After a few moments, however, he assumed a sudden gaiety. His face, so haggard, was wreathed in smiles.

“It's only a fit of the *blues*,” he laughed, in language as colloquial—we had almost said vulgar—as his previous words had been elevated. “A touch of the *horrors*; that is all. My mind has been on the stretch too long—I am excited by too much exertion—I need a little repose, and”—he smiled—“a little cheerful relaxation.”

He raised his hand, and, as if in obedience to the sign, the Cloaked Figure retreated back, and sank on the sofa.

“My familiar spirit,” said the Man, still smiling. And he threw back the cloak and discovered the face of his companion, or victim.

It was the face of a young girl. Her eyes were closed as if in slumber or a death-like trance. Her lips were red and warm; her cheeks without color, save one glowing tint on each; her dark hair flowed freely around a pale white forehead.

And surrounded by the folds of the cloak, as by a monkish cowl, this face glowed in the light, with a mild and yet voluptuous loveliness.

“The lips are warm and full of life, and the dark lashes rest lovingly on the pale cheek,” soliloquized the Man with the Mask, bending over the prostrate form; “A beautiful hand, but cold as marble”—he surveyed the face with an intense gaze—“Now, in the olden time they would have hung me for a wizard, and burnt her for a witch. As it is now, we are only Magnetizer and Clairvoyant.”

With these words he gently parted the folds of the cloak.

CHAPTER THIRTIETH.

"MAGNETISM!"

The form of the girl, as she reclined in the attitude of slumber, with her arms by her side was revealed. Paint to yourself a form which has just passed from the bud of maidenhood into the blossom of early womanhood. Let every limb, every outline, be moulded with that delicacy which tells us that the beauty so warm and blooming, is yet pure from the touch of dishonor, sacred from the leprosy of one unchaste desire.

The bust is clothed in a boddice of dark velvet,—the arms gleam upon you, from sleeves of lace, which float about their round outlines, like a thin, fleecy cloud over the soft red of a dawning sky. The boddice clothes the full bosom to the very neck. Upon its dark surface a golden cross glitters with tremulous light—glitters and fades again, with each slight motion of the maiden's heart.

From the waist, whose outline neither too slender, nor too full, is described by the dark boddice, flows a skirt of pale azure, sprinkled with small points of gold, which shine and gleam on every fold. The feet, clad in slippers of white satin, and crossed gently over one another, appear beneath the hem of this garment.

This form, attired in a costume at once rich, elegant and somewhat fantastical, is thrown boldly into view, by the dark cloak on which it reclines.

"My familiar spirit," again exclaimed the Man with the Mask, as he surveyed the reclining girl. "She is now in the first stage of the Magnetic slumber—if it can be called a slumber. Her body is paralyzed, while her mind enjoys a serenity beyond the power of words."

He grasped her hand, while an expression of singular gladness flitted over his features and made him look young again.

"My beautiful *Clairvoyant*!" he whispered, "with your Will subject to mine, in other words, with your Soul in close communion with mine, you will now 'prophesy unto me.' You will gaze upon the Past and the Future—aye, and the Present shall not be neglected in the wanderings of your spirit. You will tell

me the plots of my enemies—that is, if I have enemies—" he displayed his white teeth in a smile—"and you will reveal the purposes of my friends. Will you not?"

A smile, almost imperceptible, played around the lips of the slumbering girl.

"Yes, there are three stages of the Magnetic life," soliloquized the Man with the Mask. "The first is when the body slumbers, while the Mind enjoys unutterable repose. The second is when the Mind soars forth from the body, at the Will of the Magnetizer, and goes and comes at his very thought. It is a grand idea! While I am shut out from all the world by the thick walls of this mansion—alone with this slumbering girl—I can *will* her Soul to wander where I please, and wring the secrets of the Past and Future from her lips. But then there is the third state——"

He dropped her hand. An indefinable gloom fell upon his countenance. He turned away, and fixed his eyes upon the carpet, pressing his finger absently against his nether lip. In an instant his face had grown old again.

"It troubles me! The mystery of the third state would almost make one believe in a Hereafter. It has always defied my comprehension, and is yet dark as midnight. Dark! Dark! In the third state, which exceeds immeasurably the wonders of clairvoyance, the Soul of the Magnetized, separated from the body, refuses to obey the *will* of the Magnetizer. It wanders where its own will dictates, and traverses past, present and future, with the rapidity of Thought. It is, in a word, *all thought*—thought, divorced from the gross organization of the flesh—thought, wandering through the Universe, as the sun-ray wanders through the summer air."

The voice of the Man rose from a whisper, in a tone characterized by much sweetness of enunciation. He seemed to forget that he was alone; he raised his hand with an absent gesture, while his gleaming eye was fixed upon the shadows of the room, with a wild and rhapsodical expression. The wonders of this science—or this Revelation—known as 'Magnetism,' seem to stir him into a new life.

"And yet I fear this third stage—fear it much—very much," he muttered after a pause. "What if this new *Clairvoyant* whom I have never magnetized before to-night, should pass

into a higher state, and refuse to obey my will? Ah—she might tell me things that I would not like to hear—she might—” his voice sank low and lower, while his eyes sought the floor—“repeat in audible words *the secrets of Twenty years.*”

And then pacing along the carpet, between the sofa and the light, the Man with the Mask folded his arms tightly over his breast, while his down-drawn brows almost buried his eyes with their shadow.

And the slumbering girl reclined on the sofa without speech or motion, her dark lashes resting on the cheek, which gleamed with a single tint of red, and her arms dropped stiffly by her side.

And while the girl slumbers there, and the the Man paces the floor in absorbing thought—while the thick shadows of the chamber are scarcely broken by the rays of the solitary candle—let us say a word in relation to the wonderful fact of the Universe, which in the olden time was called Witchcraft, but which in this Nineteenth Century is called Magnetism.

What is Magnetism? Is it good or evil? Is it from God or the Devil? Is it indeed a Fact, as tangible as our existence, or only a dream, as idle as a hypocrite's religion?

It would require volumes to answer questions such as these.

But to strip the subject of all technical verbiage—of the terms of science and the phrases of schools—let us endeavour—not to describe it—but to give a faint idea, in plain words, of its vast meaning.

Let us premise, once for all, that we are not writing now, for that large and respectable class of people, who are always ready to exclaim “Humbug! Humbug! I will not believe any thing but that which is as tangible—as easily grasped—as the Dollar which I get for a yard of Dry-goods.”

We never write for this worthy and acute branch of the human family. It is not in our way. If you talk to them of “twenty per cent a month, on good paper,” they will understand you. Speak of the duty of every Man to take care of Man his Brother—of the Gospel uttered in Nazareth, which bade Toil to arise and hope—of the inevitable curse which attends the present relation of Work and Gold, or Labor and Capital—speak of themes like

these, and your sagacious gentlemen of Shop and Green Board, will swear that you are talking Greek. They cannot understand you. Of course, everything beyond their comprehension must be false.

But let us write for another class, who are willing to look with inquiry and with reverence upon that world of awful mysteries, with which God has encircled this world of everyday Facts.

It may be that Magnetism is the great tie which binds the great family of Humanity to its God.

It may be the invisible Ocean of Being which is evermore breaking upon the shores of our lower world—its low murmurs repeated in the songs of Poet and Prophet, through all time.

But let Magnetism be what it will, it is not Evil.

Like every good thing it may be perverted. Quacks have peddled the Gospel—is the Gospel therefore a lie? Quacks and mountebanks have exhibited the mysteries of Magnetism, to gaping audiences at a quarter of a dollar per head—is Magnetism therefore a delusion?

Magnetism is good. It is of God. It will, without a doubt, at some future day, be made the direct agent of incalculable blessing from God to all the human race.

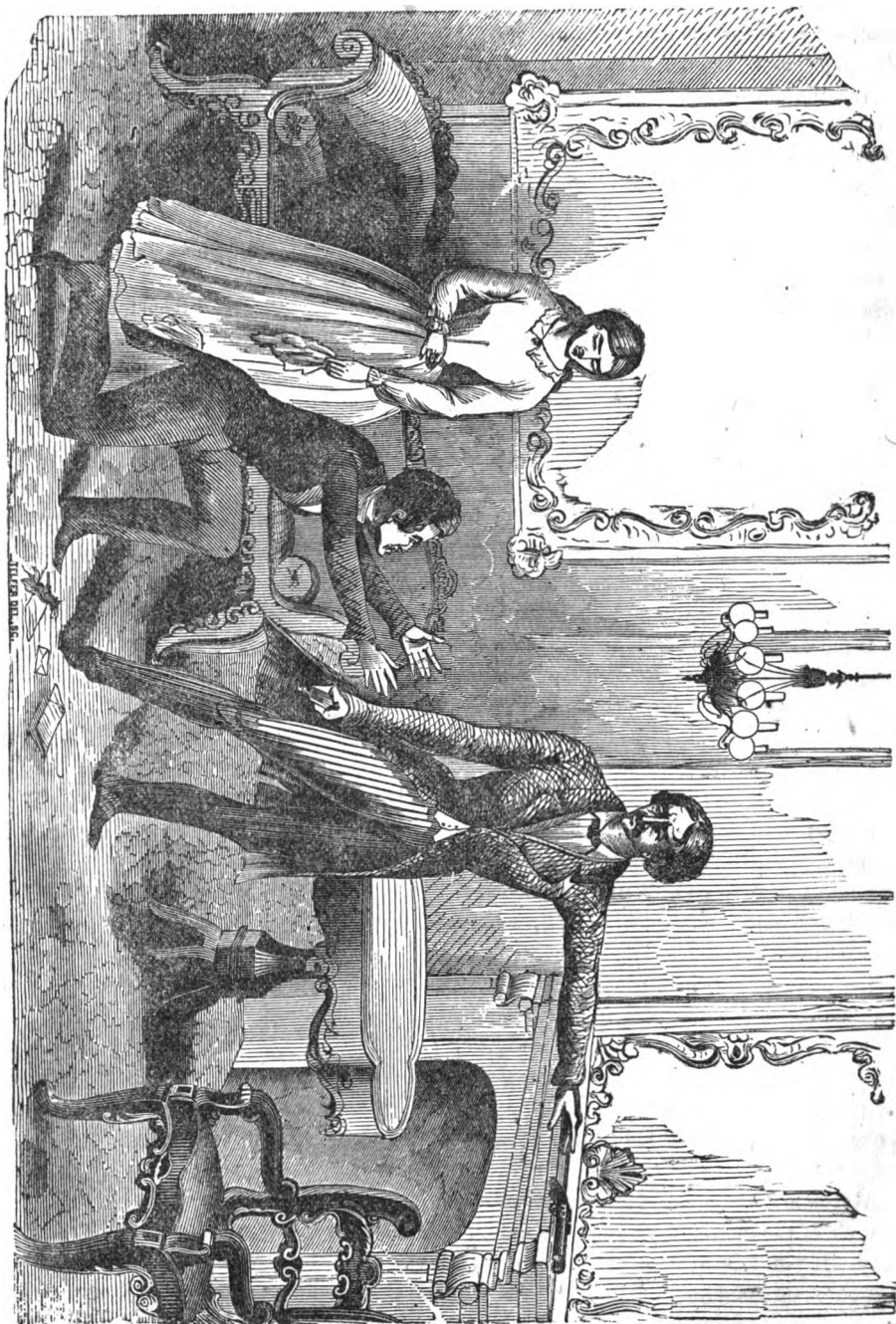
It seems to us to be divided into three forms.

The first, called simply the Magnetic Slumber—the body is perfectly paralysed, while the Mind is unutterably calm. No words can depict the complete QUIET of the Soul, while in this state.

The second is known as the Clairvoyant state. The Mind of the Magnetized roams wherever the will of the Magnetizer commands. It is thoroughly subject to his will. To speak in plain words—the Soul of the Magnetized seems for a while to have lost itself in the Soul of the Magnetizer.

The third state may be called TRANCE, although the word does not altogether convey our meaning. Here, the Soul seem to be altogether freed from the Body. It soars where it will, and beyond the power of the Magnetizer. We all have read well-accredited stories of persons who have been entranced—whose bodies have reposed for days and weeks in a state re-

"THERE ARE PISTOLS, EDWARD JENYIS. THERE IS A PHIAL OF PRUSSIC ACID, EDWARD JENYIS. YOU CAN TAKE YOUR CHOICE."—See p. 96.



sembling Death, while their Souls journeyed to the World of Spirits, and communed with Angels.

These histories of Entranced persons, are not peculiar to any age. They are scattered over the expanse of Eighteen centuries. In the time of Sir Matthew Hale, a person in a state of Trance was "bewitched." In the day of the Rev. William Tennent of New Jersey, Trance was only another name for supernatural communication with the Other World. And in the present age, Trance is written down among the wonders of Magnetism.

The reader will bear these broken hints in mind, while perusing the scene which follows.

Did the slumbering Girl become Clairvoyant, or did she pass beyond the control of the Magnetizer, in the higher and more mysterious world of TRANCE?

Trance has various outward manifestations. The body sometimes lies in corpse-like immovability. The lips do not uncloset; no word passes the sealed portals of speech. Again the body stirs with a strange life; the eyes flash; the cheeks glow; the lips mutter words which—according to the character of the listener—are the ravings of incoherent frenzy, or the revelations of Prophetic Inspiration.

CHAPTER THIRTY-FIRST.

REVELATIONS OF TRANCE.

The Man with the Mask approached the slumbering girl.

Once he started—and looked hurriedly around the shadows of the apartment. The profound stillness impressed him with a sensation of momentary dread.

Then bending over the sofa, he took the hands of the girl within his own, and gazed into her face with an intensity which indicated that his entire Soul was absorbed in some tremendous exertion of the Will.

The sleeper began to move. Her bosom heaved violently. Her lips parted, and disclosed the ivory whiteness of her teeth, but she did not speak. A profound sigh, which seemed wrung from the very depths of her heart, agitated the breathless stillness of the chamber.

The face of the Man became rigid as with

the touch of Death. The veins stood out in bold relief upon his forehead. His eyes dilated with an intense glare—he was evidently nerving his Will for a desperate task.

The agitation of the Sleeper increased. Once more she sighed—her head sank languidly upon the cushion of the sofa—her bosom rose and fell beneath its dark vestment.

The Man with the Mask—thus we must call him, for we know him by no other name—broke the silence by a deep whisper:

"Do you love me?"

The girl blushed from her throat to her forehead. For the first time a word passed her lips.

"I am in your power," she whispered, with another blush, followed by a perceptible shudder.

"You can serve me, Sister. Listen! and do not lose a single word. I must know certain things from your lips. To-night, I have been haunted by the face of a Man, who resembles very much the face of one whom I saw a year and more ago. Search out the purpose of this man; let me know his thoughts; track his every step. Do you hear me child?"

The girl did not reply. She sank back without speech or motion. She would have resembled an image of Death, had it not been for the warm red of her lips, and the faint glow of her cheeks.

"What can it mean?" soliloquized the Man, with a gesture of impatience; "She does not heed me. She does not obey my will!"

He remained in silent thought for a moment, and then sank on one knee beside the sofa.

His eyes once more glared with fixed intensity, and with his hands he described a circle in the air above her head.

"Come, my child. We leave this house. We are in the street. We turn the corner, and enter the next street. We hurry to the north of the city. Do you see the Church? Answer me! The man whom I wish to follow and know is there—within the Church—do you see clearly? Speak!"

Not a word passed the lips of the reclining girl.

The man started abruptly to his feet.

"This is strange indeed! She does not seem to hear me. What can it mean?"

There was a shade of doubt upon his fore-

head, and then a smile crept from his lips to his eyes.

"I will awake her," he murmured—and smiled again. "We are alone."

He passed his hands along her hands and arms and cheeks, to her forehead. He was engaged in arousing her from the magnetic slumber.

But to his amazement she remained without a word or a movement—prostrate and death-like upon the cushion of the sofa. The slight agitation of her velvet boddice, showed that her bosom still throbbed with life, but her hands lay stiff and marble-like on her robe, and the soft tint died away on her cheek. Her face so young and beautiful, began to grow rigid as with the chill of death.

"Dying! No—No! It cannot be! And yet there have been instances where magnetism has ended in death, or in convulsions which brought on death. A nature frail and impressive like this, might indeed sink under the experiment—"

With alarm in every feature, he seized her hands, again endeavoured to restore her from the magnetic slumber, but this effort was as futile as the other.

"It would be awkward, very awkward, if she was to die—" said the Man with the Mask, falling once more into a free colloquial dialect.

"What can I do?"

He peered into the shadows of the place—surveyed his form in the lofty mirrors—and at last buried his face in his hands, which rested against the mantel-piece.

And for some minutes the mirror opposite reflected his motionless form, with the rays of the light falling upon his brown hair.

While he stands there, pondering and troubled, let us turn our eyes toward the sofa.

How beautiful she looks, with her dark hair floating along her pale cheeks, down to her very shoulders!

Above her the ceiling which glows with painted images of beauty—beauty without a blush, while the loveliness of the Sleeper is softened by an expression of maidenhood in its very purity of bloom—around her, the lofty walls, whose mirrors reflect the outlines of her form—silent, death-like, eyes and lips sealed,

she slumbers in an unnatural or preternatural Trance.

Yet hold—a slight motion agitates her limbs. Her hand is lifted; she rises languidly from her prostrate position. The bloom returns to her cheeks—throbbing with sudden life, her bosom beats beneath the velvet boddice.

The Man with the Mask remains by the mantel, his head bowed in his hands.

Agitated by an emotion whose meaning we cannot define, she trembles—shudders—blushes—and at last her eyelids are unclosed. Her eyes, radiant with a light which seems not so much to flash from the pupils, as to hover around them, like a separate brightness, illumine her face with a wild and spiritual glory.

She speaks in a low voice—a voice slow and distinct—yet ringing with an accent of unnatural melody. Her first word startles the Man from his reverie. He cannot believe his ears. He remains paralyzed with his head between his hands. For that word evokes a terrible memory from the shadows of twenty years.

"*Mary Mervyn!*" said the young girl, with her eyes fixed on vacancy.

The Man with the Mask heard the name, and yet could not raise his head from his hands—had not the power to turn and gaze upon the speaker's face.

CHAPTER THIRTY-SECOND.

THE FIRST SECRET OF A LIFE OF TWENTY YEARS.

And then, sitting erect upon the sofa, with her hands tightly clasped, and her whole form with its corpse-like rigidity of outline, presenting a strong contrast to the face glowing with blushes, and illumined by eyes of more than mortal brightness, the Entranced Girl murmured the first words of a harrowing Revelation.

"The setting sun flames in molten fire upon the mountain tops, and lingers in flashes of light upon the tremulous waves of the Hudson. Near the river, in the hollow between two hills crowned with locust trees in blossom, stands the House of the Poor Man. Look at it, as the last ray flashes upon the window pane, half shaded by vines and flowers! A

broad chesnut branch is over the roof—before the door a garden, surrounded by a white fence—not far off a brooklet sings under the leaves and over the rocks. Is it not a beautiful place, this house of the Poor Man, nestling in a hollow of the river shore?

“Hark! There is a step upon the garden walk—there is a form between my eyes and the doorway of that humble home. She is very beautiful, the Daughter of the Poor Man. Alas! Alas, poor Mary Mervyn!”

At these words, uttered in a tone of unutterable pity, the Man with the Mask uttered a groan. Still he could not turn and look upon the speaker’s face. He was conscious that she had passed into the *third phase* of the Magnetic state; that her Soul was beyond the power of his will. And yet her every word pierced his heart like a dagger.

“Poor Mary Mervyn! Standing so beautiful in the garden whose flowers were planted by your hands, have you no fear for the future? The setting sun shines brightly on your dark hair, and plays with your cheek until it gathers a deep blush—very, very beautiful Mary Mervyn! I see you stand alone in the garden. I see you gather the white kerchief around your whiter neck. All day long I could look into your face, and drink the gladness of your eyes!

“Another footstep in the garden! The father, with white hair and hands cramped with toil, and sun-burnt face seamed with wrinkles. A very poor man is old Abel Mervyn, and yet he is rich in his daughter—rich in his humble home—rich in his trust in God.

“Another step! It is the aged mother—she comes forth from her low doorway, and looks upon the old man and his child, whose faces are reddened by the same sun-beam.

“Is it not a beautiful scene?

“Three persons in the garden—an old man—his wife, who had shared his lot these thirty years—and a beautiful girl, their only child.

“Who is it that comes to plant a curse within the walls of this happy home? Who—Alas! Alas! poor Mary Mervyn!”

“Hold!” the Man with the Mask turned, and with a single stride reached the sofa: “You shall not go on—”

He seized her by the wrists, but her eyes

gazed upon him as though they saw him not. She was not conscious of his presence. In vain he endeavored to awaken her from this Trance. She continued to speak the Revelation which was passing before the eyes of her soul.

Her voice sank into a whisper as she continued:

“It is night, and the fireside taper burns within that humble Home. The moon is up, and the Hudson glitters in her light, and the mountain tops glow with a pale silvery lustre. Within the cottage of the old man is heard the voice of prayer. Three forms are kneeling around the opened Bible, which is placed upon a chair. Mary, the father and the mother; it is a beautiful picture. But the door opens, and another face is revealed by the fireside candle. Ah! does Satan come so smilingly into Eden? It is a young man, with a measured step, and a face impressed with a deep solemnity. Sleek brown hair around his white forehead—glossy black attire upon his slender form. He also kneels; he prays. The Young Preacher mingles with the devotions of this happy home. Hark! Do you hear his earnest words—do you see his outspread hands and uplifted eyes? Alas, poor Mary Mervyn!”

There was a pause. The Man with the Mask sank on his knees, and buried his face against the sofa. And then in a lower, deeper voice, with a glassy eye and a flushed cheek, the Entranced girl went on:

“Summer is gone. It is winter. Ice upon the Hudson; snow upon the hills. The garden is white with snow. All is still. A single ray trembles from the closed shutters of Abel Mervyn’s home. Let us enter. Are they kneeling in their evening prayer? A light spread a dim radiance through the place. Beside the fire, his head between his hands, sits the old man. He is alone. His face is changed. Sadly, sadly changed. He grasps a bottle with his trembling hands—the Bible, covered with dust, lies upon the table. He utters a curse, and casts his eye to the door of the next room. Oh, the agony—the despair of that face, now writhing with the madness of the brain and the madness of the bottle!

“Yes, it is true. Abel Mervyn has become a drunkard. A life of hard labor and steady

virtue has not preserved him from this curse in his old age. But where is his wife—where his child? Where the Young Preacher?

"Listen! A cry comes through the panels of the door—a groan is heard. It is the cry of a new-born child. It is the groan of a Mother, who has no blessing for the fruit of her womb. A Mother who turns away from her new-born child, for the print of shame is on its face—the baptism of contempt upon its young life.

"The old man starts to his feet at the sound of that cry, mingled with the Mother's groan. And raising his hands above his face, blackened by despair, he breathes an awful imprecation upon the head and upon the life of the Young Preacher."

Once more she paused—but the Man with the Mask did not raise his face from the sofa.

"Poor Mary Mervyn! It is summer again, and her footsteps thread the winding path which leads from the cottage to the spring, within the shadows of the trees. She has left her aged mother—she has left her father, who sits besotted and blaspheming, upon the bench in front of the cottage, his bleared eye-balls turned to the setting sun,

"She has left that home once so happy, but now the abode of hopeless wretchedness. With a languid step she threads the windings of the path. Her face is very pale—her eyes swollen. Within her shawl she carries the fruit of her dishonor. She hides the face of her babe from the light. It is accursed.

"And down the path, until she reaches the clear spring, hidden in a hollow of the woods. See how the water sparkles in its rocky basin! It is clear and cold and deep, and only one ray of sunshine trembles upon its sullen bosom.

"Mary is kneeling now. She has taken her babe from her breast. Look! How it smiles and reaches forth its tiny hands, and looks up into the Mother's face! But her eye is cold and stone-like. '*This is thy only baptism, child of shame!*' you hear her words. She plunges her child into the spring. She presses its face beneath the cold wave. She holds it firmly there until it is dead."

The Man with the Mask rose to his feet. His face was old again. Old and haggard, and seamed with wrinkles.

"What became of her?" he said, and fiercely grasped the wrists of the Magnetized girl.

"Speak, or I will throttle you! What became of Mary Mervyn?"

Do you realize the scene?

Do you behold the Entranced girl, sitting erect on the sofa—her eyes bright with an unnatural glassy lustre, fixed upon vacancy—her cheek flushed, her dark hair streaming over her gay attire, as her lips move slowly with the accents of a fearful Revelation?

And the Man with the Mask—do you behold him trembling in every limb, as he grasps her wrists, and shrieks his question to her sealed ears?

"What became of Mary Mervyn?"

As though she had not heard these words—as though she was utterly unconscious of his presence—the Entranced exclaimed:

"It is a cold winter day. They have tried the Mother for the Murder of her child. On the thousand faces of the crowded Court streams the glad sunshine. They are bringing her to the Bar. An aged woman, whose face is half in shadow, supports the Murderess—and in the back ground, haggard and swollen, appears the face of an old man who looks upon the scene with half-shut eyes.

"You hear the voice of the Judge—'Stand up, Mary Mervyn, and hear the sentence of the Court.' Mary has sunk back in a chair. Aided by her mother's hand she staggers to her feet. She stretches forth her hand and rests it upon the Bar. Her eyes are downcast—her cheek, no longer blooming, is sallow and corpse-like. A thousand eyes behold that trembling woman, as, half supported by a Mother's arm, and half clinging to the Judgment Bar, she waits the sentence of the Law.

"It is a different scene, Mary Mervyn, from that where we first beheld your face!

"The sun shines on the black hair, which the white cap only half conceals. A ray warms that deathly face. The spectators hold their breath. The very Judge pronounces the sentence of the Law with tears.

"Listen to his words: 'Mary Mervyn, you have been convicted of the wilful murder of your own child. It is the sentence of this Court that you be taken from hence unto your cell, and from thence on the appointed day, to the place of execution, where you shall be hung by the neck until you are dead. God be merciful to your Soul!'"

"But they did not hang her?" cried the Man with the Mask, staggering backward, as though stricken by a strong arm—"They did not hang a woman?"

"Where is the Young Preacher while his victim stands up to receive the sentence of Death?" continued the Entranced girl. "Ah! he is far away—far away, and in scenes of new triumph. Hark! How his voice rings from the pulpit at the very moment when in yonder jail-yard the Gallows is waiting for his victim—"

And as the Man with the Mask sank once more upon his knees, the golden cross glittered upon the dark boddice of the Entranced girl.

CHAPTER THIRTY-THIRD.

THE MASK IS LIFTED FROM THE SOUL OF THE PREACHER.

"What became of her? Mary Mervyn! They did not dare to hang a woman?"

The Entranced girl was silent.

The unnatural brightness faded from her eyes. Her cheeks became marble-like. Her hands fell stiffly by her side. She sank back on the sofa, pale and inanimate as the dead.

With his hands clasped, and his eyes cast to the floor, the Man with the Mask remained for some moments in an attitude of profound thought.

"After all there *may be* a God—" these words came slowly from his lips: "After all the words which I have said for twenty years *may be* true. Mary Mervyn! Mary Mervyn! I have not thought of her before to-night for many a year. How and where did she die?"

Glancing into the shadows of the room, he shuddered, and grew cold as ice, as a picture was vividly painted by his agitated fancy, upon those very shadows. It was no dumb picture traced upon canvass, but a picture that lived, moved, and spoke.

A woman ascending the steps of a Gibbet under a cloudless sky. A woman lifting her eyes to the clear heaven, as her white neck was encircled by the Hangman's rope. A woman looking for the last time upon earth and sky—upon the sea of faces around the Gibbet—ere the white cap was drawn over her face. A woman, lifting that white cap for a single moment, to take a last look at the face

of her Father, to fling a last word into the heart of a Mother. Father and Mother were waiting at the Gibbet's foot. And the last scene of this living picture, was the form of a Woman, suspended in the air, hands tied behind her back, white cap drawn over her face, the hangman's rope about her neck, and her limbs quivering with a movement at once grotesque and horrible.

The Man with the Mask sank, rather than fell upon his knees. His face was aged, haggard—moisture glittered on his forehead—his colorless lips moved, but framed no sound.

The look which he cast to the painted ceiling was steeped in the last anguish of remorse and despair.

He tried to utter a word of prayer, but in vain.

The name of God died in his throat.

And then over his soul there came an apathy which crushed every sense, every thought, in a vague and dreamy stupor. The light became dim before his eyes. The sounds of bells were in his ears. He had only strength to join his hands in a death-like clasp. The power to shape a thought, or utter a sound, was passed from him—it seemed—forever.

Was he entering a state of Trance? Had the soul of the Entranced Girl obtained an awful power over his brain? Was he entering the strange life of Trance, or was he slowly sinking into that dim valley, whose shadows are called Death?

The answer to these questions lies beyond our power.

But it was as though some supernatural Hand had palsied his heart, his blood, his brain. It was as though some Judgment from a higher World had suddenly descended upon his soul, as the pall descends upon the breast of the dead.

How long he remained in this state, we cannot tell, but when his sight again became clear, he looked around, like one who is suddenly restored from Death to life.

He tottered to his feet, like one whose senses are half-bewildered by the spectres of a dream.

"If my life is spared after this night, I will hide me in some dark corner of the world. I will endeavour to make the future atone for the past. There is yet a hope for me, but where? In the Church where I have preached

for twenty years? Ah—I have been but the *Mountebank behind the scenes*. I have moved the emotions of the crowd at my will. Moved it with the puppets of my eloquence and—piety—but it cannot be expected that a Mountebank should believe in his own puppet show.”

He strode along the carpet, while a sardonic sneer came over his haggard face. In a moment, however, he paused abruptly, and gazed wildly around him, like a man who sees an abyss yawn suddenly at his feet.

“The Unpardonable Sin,” he gasped—“All sins but that may be forgiven! The Pirate who ascends from some bloody deck, and stands dripping with crimes, at the Bar of God—even he may be forgiven. There is forgiveness even for the Mother who strangles the child which is the fruit of her womb. Forgiveness for the son who stains his Father’s grey hairs with blood. But for *me*——”

He raised his hands above his head, his voice rung with an emphasis of horror, which no words may depict—it was a voice which once heard would have rung in your ears forever.

“For me the blasphemer—for me the profaner of the Sacrament—for me, that for twenty years have stood between God and Man, playing a juggler’s tricks with the mysteries of Eternity—acting a part before the eyes of man, while my heart with all its hollowness was known to God—for me, the Preacher of a creed, which my soul laughs to very scorn—where is there hope, where mercy? Where any future but despair and hell?”

With uneven steps he strode backward and forward, wringing his hands, and muttering like a madman.

The voluptuous splendour of that room was forgotten. The obscene pictures glowing dimly in the faint light, were all unheeded. Even the form upon the sofa, was entirely unnoticed, as the Man with the Mask strode to and fro.

“From the pulpit I have hurried to the very kennels of debauchery. The same tongue that has preached of life and death—of heaven and hell—of the Incarnation of God—and the sinner lost forever—has within an hour, been whispering the accents of pollution in the ears of some poor but innocent woman. Ah, if the

creed which I have preached for twenty years prove to be truth, then may God have mercy on my soul!”

A long pause ensued, while the speaker remained motionless near the sofa, his eyes cast to the floor.

“These hands have pressed the Sacramental Cup at the altar, and the next moment written the letter which blasted an innocent wife to her death.”

As though his hands were red with blood he shook them in the air, while his eyes were turned away from the ring which glittered on his finger.

Casting his gaze toward the sofa, he seemed to control his emotion by a violent exertion of the will. Or, this emotion, deep and maddening as it was, yielded by an agitation as powerful, but entirely different in its character.

“Beautiful as a statue of ice, and as cold!”—he murmured, and advancing to the sofa, bent his keen eyes upon the colorless face of the girl. The cross was motionless upon her breast. Not a single pulsation indicated that life still dwelt within her heart.

“The Man whose face haunts me now—whose words still ring in my ears! Do you hear me? Follow this Man. Track him from the Church. Search his heart, and read his every thought. I command you. My Will that never failed me yet, until this night, now resumes its power, and that power is upon you girl.”

Taking her hands within his own, he bent forward and centred his gaze upon her face. The strained muscles of his countenance showed that he was making a last and most desperate effort of the Will.

The stillness of the chamber was appalling—it was not even broken by his deep-drawn breath.

The sleeper stirred faintly—the cross upon her bosom glittered as it rose upon the boddice of black velvet. Presently she started once more into a sitting posture, and confronted him, with eyes obscured by a glassy film.

“Speak,” she murmured—her lips moving as though her nerves were struggling with paralysis: “I will obey you.”

“The Man leaves the Church. Follow him,” said the Man with the Mask, still clasping the

hands of the girl, while his eyes grew brighter as they rested upon her face.

Once more the girl unclosed her lips :

"I see him. He leaves the Church. He hurries down the street toward the south. As he comes from the shadow into the moonlight, I can see his face. It is wet with tears. He murmurs a name —"

"That name is —"

"I cannot hear it. He still hastens to the south. Ah! he enters a wide street, which leads westward. He hurries on with quickened steps. He—" there was a pause—"he does not stop until he stands —"

"Until he stands—" interrupted the Man with the Mask: "Go on, go on, until he stands —"

Again the Magnetized girl resumed :

"Until he stands before the door of a large house. The walls are bathed in moonlight."

Again she paused. Her breast expanded with a deep sigh.

"Describe the house," whispered the Man with the Mask.

"It is large. There are four ranges of windows. The shutters are painted dark green. They are closed. A silver plate glitters on the door."

The Man with the Mask exhibited a deeper interest at every low word which passed the slow moving lips of the girl.

"Read the name on the door-plate —"

"A cloud passes over the moon. It is dark. I cannot see. Yet hold! I can read, now. The name — the name —"

"The name?" cried the Man with the Mask.

"Caleb Goodleigh," exclaimed the girl.

CHAPTER THIRTY-FOURTH.

A NEW REVELATION.

A tremor shook his limbs at these words. Still clasping the hands of the girl, while his eyes flashed in his ashen face, he exclaimed :

"Go on. I command you. Does this man enter the house?"

"No. He conceals his form behind a tree-box in front of the door. Look! He is watching there while two persons ascend the steps, and enter the house."

"Does he, then, enter?"

"Two persons, a man and a woman enter, but still he is watching there. But look! Here are others! One — two — three — four — five — six — seven — eight — nine! Nine persons enter while he watches behind the tree-box."

"And then —"

"Hark! A carriage rolls along the street. It stops before the door. The Man behind the tree box and the driver converse together for a few moments. Then the carriage moves away into the shadows on the opposite side of the street —"

"And the Man —"

"He enters the house. He enters without ringing. Look! He is in the hall, under the light of the hanging lamp. He seems to hesitate. The long entry extends before him. On his left hand are two doors. He is listening beside the first. He hears the clinking of glasses, and the sound of voices, which mingle in loud conversation."

"And then—" the Man with the Mask seemed to pant for breath. Wiping the perspiration from his forehead, he bent nearer to the girl, and listened intently to her almost inaudible words.

"He hesitates. He knows not which door to open. Look! He opens the second door. O, what a large room, with mirrors reaching from the floor to the ceiling, and a small lamp standing upon a white marble table. It is such a beautiful place!"

"Go on," muttered the Man with the Mask between his set teeth: "Tell me his every word — describe his every look."

"All is still in that beautiful room. The Man does not speak. He steals on tip-toe toward the folding doors, which lead into the next chamber. He listens! Voices — glasses clinking with glasses — shouts — laughter! He hears it all. His hand is on the knob of the door —"

"He enters the next room," interrupted the Man with the Mask.

"He enters — no, no! He is about to enter, when he sees a dress which rests upon the carpet, near the marble table. Ah, it is my dress — mine! The dress which I wore when I came into that room, before you commanded me to put on this one, which I now wear. A

very, very poor dress; not half so beautiful as this!"

"He sees this dress—"

"He takes it in his hands, and sinks back upon the sofa. He lifts his fur cap, and I can see his face. Ah, it frightens me! It is wet with tears, but it frowns so darkly, and the lips grow white as they are set together. Listen! He is speaking—"

"Tell me what he says. Do not lose a word. Quick, girl—"

"He repeats two words. Only two. Fanny and Ellen. Fanny and Ellen—not a word more."

"And now—go on—"

"He is moving to the door which leads into the entry. He is startled by a sound from the next room. He conceals himself within the curtains of the window. The folding doors are thrown open. A very bright light fills the place. Many people enter. Men and women, dressed as though for a festival, and talking rapidly with each other. Yet, stay! There is one Quaker there. What does he in the gay company? Ah, and there is the tall dark man, whom I saw in the Church. The man who led me from the Church to this house. He stands in the midst of the company, with a roll of parchment in his hand. Hark! He is speaking to his guests in a low voice."

"And this Man behind the window curtain? Do they discover him?"

"No. He is concealed from every eye. He listens to every word. And the guests of the tall dark man—"

"Never mind the guests. Keep your eyes upon the man behind the window curtains. How long does he remain there?"

"Until the tall dark man—Brother Caleb, I think you called him? Until, he has finished speaking. The company throng back again into the next room. The folding doors are closed again. The man steals from behind the curtains. He leaves the room. He hastens along the entry—up the stairs—"

"Up the stairs. Go on—"

"He stops before one of the doors at the head of the stairs."

The Man with the Mask uttered an oath.

"Well—well—he pauses there. What then?"

"He listens at the door. He hears your

voice—yours and mine together. You are asking me to go away with you from the city—I am telling you of my dying mother. The man listens, and grates his teeth together. Then——"

"Then."—the Man with the Mask echoed the word with a tremulous voice.

"The door opens. You come forth with a golden cup in your hand. Then a person, whose face is concealed by a cloak, which falls from the top of the head to the very feet—that person holds a silver candle-stick, in which a large white candle is placed. They pass along the entry, they cross a threshold, and stand face to face, in a narrow room. Ah! there is some one gazing upon them from the glass door of yonder closet. Hush! It is my brother. It is Ralph."

The bosom of the girl heaved with a violent pulsation. But the Man with the Mask, unheeding her agitation, and without care of her deep-whispered words—"It is my brother. It is Ralph"—continued to press her hands, while his face was strained and distorted in every muscle.

"And the Man who listened at the door, while I was conversing with you—where is he?"

The girl slowly elevated her right hand. Her eyes flashed with a brightness that dissolved their glassy film.

"Look! He creeps in the shadows at your heels. He follows you into the narrow apartment. While the figure with the cloak—that is me—is kneeling—while the man with the Cup—that is you—waves his hand over my head—this stranger steals in the shadows, near the wall. He—"

"Yes—yes," gasped the Man with the Mask, fairly wringing his hands with a gesture of mad impatience.

"He gains the door, which is ajar. He passes into the darkness. You lead me onward—after this stranger. Along the entry, into the room——"

Trembling in every fibre, the Man with the Mask whispered in a husky tone—

"Where is he now? Speak, or I will tear the secret from your heart. Where——"

The girl was silent.

As she sat upon the sofa, her face colored with a roseate flush, but her eyes became

glassy again. Her lips moved, but no sound was heard.

Glancing around the chamber, whose gloom was only revealed by the solitary candle, the Man with the Mask wrung her hands with a clutch that was like the grasp of a mortal hatred.

"Speak!" he said, and his voice had more power in its husky hollowness of tone than the most boisterous shout: "Speak, girl! How did this man escape from the house?"

The girl was still silent.

Then the eye of the Man with the Mask fairly blazed with the intensity of a powerful Will, concentrated in one effort; it seemed as though all the Magnetic power of his brain was flowing in a steady current from his eyes into her soul.

"Speak," he whispered low, and bent nearer to her: "You must tell me how he escaped."

Her lips moved:

"All is dark: I cannot see," she said; and then, in a voice that made the blood grow cold in the listener's veins—"there is another Soul now contending with yours for the mastery of my being."

He dropped her hands, and sunk back from the sofa, as though her words had stabbed him.

"Another Soul," the words crossed his lips: "Ah, that accounts for the revelation of this night! You would not have spoken of Mary Mervyn had not an antagonist Will been opposed to mine."

"He is here," exclaimed the girl—"Here, in this room, at your side."

You may imagine the mingled emotions of the Man with the Mask. He hesitated for a moment, as though afraid to believe that she had in reality uttered the words which pierced his ears.

"Here? Of whom do you speak?"

"Of Charles Denny Lester, the brother of Ellen your wife."

These words were not uttered by the Magnetized girl.

They were spoken by a manly voice, which indicated by its very depth and tremor, that they were the utterance of a heart wrung to its very core by mortal agony.

Turning, as though he had received his death-warrant, the Man with the Mask beheld the UNKNOWN standing at his side.

Yes, the Unknown had stepped from the shadows of the mantel-piece—which projecting from the body of the wall, had concealed his form from view—and now, with his pale forehead bared to the light, stood face to face with the Popular Preacher.

He had thrown his fur cap aside. His brown hair, falling in disordered masses around the outline of his brow, was glued to that brow by moisture. His gaze was calm and clear, and very bright; every lineament of his face, save his mouth, was fixed and cold as marble. The mouth alone moved—moved with a slight smile, whose meaning was more significant to the Preacher than the most sullen scowl.

CHAPTER THIRTY-FIFTH.

THE BROTHER AND THE PREACHER.

And the Preacher in silence surveyed that face, and suffered his gaze to rest upon that form, enveloped in the bear-skin overcoat.

Then, as if rooted to the floor, he stood motionless before the Unknown, his chest swelling with convulsive respirations, while his hands clutched at his white cravat with an absent motion.

The Unknown returned his gaze, and his voice was heard as the smile played about his lips:

"———, we have met at last!" he said, repeating the name of the Popular Preacher: "Do not wonder that I call you by that name. The name by which you wedded Ellen Lester is not much known in this city. By the bye, *Edmund Jervis*, do you ever think of your wife, Mistress Ellen Jervis? Do you ever think of the quiet village of Prairie Home, out yonder in the west? But this is thoughtless in me. You win so many triumphs under your real name of ———, that you have no time to think of *Edmund Jervis*, much less of Prairie Home and your dead wife, Ellen Jervis."

To these words the Preacher made no reply. The presence of the Unknown, or Charles Denny Lester, deprived him of all control over his will. Haggard, almost idiotic in the face, quivering in every limb, he looked vacantly upon the Brother of Ellen, without the power to utter a syllable.

"And she was destined to fill Ellen's bed?"

The Unknown pointed to the girl, who sate upon the sofa, with a bloom like a summer dawn stealing over her cheeks: "Was she also destined to share Ellen's grave?"

"You are mistaken," faltered the Preacher; "I am not the man. I never saw you before."

Charles placed his hand within the breast of his overcoat. The Preacher watched the movement, and cast his eyes around the room, as if seeking some mode of escape from this scene and its consequences.

Charles drew forth a package of letters. "Did you ever see these before?" he whispered, and advanced a step and held the package before the eyes of the Preacher.

And the Preacher, like a man speaking against his will, murmured the Name which was traced upon the package in a delicate hand.

"Ellen!" he said, and his small eyes seemed to retreat and bury themselves within his wrinkled lids.

Once more Charles placed his hand within the breast of his overcoat. This time he drew forth a faded tress, tied by a ribbon. It was the pale golden lock of hair which he had taken from his trunk, in the earlier part of the night.

"Do you remember this?" he whispered—"Do you remember the cheek which it shaded two years ago? How often has your hand toyed with that tress, while your lips whispered the words of Religion in the ears of the girl, whom it once adorned! Nay, do not shrink back, and shudder, as though you were afraid. Pshaw! Man, you have no fear. Take these letters—place your hand upon them—"

He forced the letters in the hand of the Preacher—the hand which was adorned by a diamond ring.

"Press your lips to this lock of Ellen's hair—"

He forced the tress against his lips.

"Now breathe but the words—'I never knew Ellen Lester! Never married, never betrayed her! Never blasted her name by an anonymous letter, never left her to die of a broken heart, while I went forth into the world to win new triumphs!' Breathe but these words, and you are free. Breathe these words, and I will bless you. Mark you! I do not

ask you for an oath; only an assertion of your innocence."

The Preacher clutched the package as a dying man clutches the hand of some watcher by his bed. But at the same time, he drew his lips away from the lock of hair, as though there had been poison in its touch.

His knees trembled and yielded beneath his body, shaken by opposing emotions: he sank on the carpet, still clutching the package in his grasp.

"Have mercy! I will make any atonement! Have mercy!"

At these words the smile passed away from the lips of Charles Lester.

"Mercy! And while the brow which that tress once shadowed, is food for the grave-worm? Come—you are jesting. Get up, Edmund. Be a man. Look your fate in the face like a man."

He took from the pocket of his coat a pair of revolving pistols, which he silently laid upon the mantel.

Then from the side pocket, over his heart, he drew forth a phial, sparkling with a colorless liquid, and similar to the one which he had left at his hotel.

Edmund Jervis—to give the Preacher his assumed name—watched these movements, with the same glance which a rabbit entrapped by a snare, might regard the trapper, who is about to pass a knife across its throat.

"There are pistols, Edmund Jervis. There is a phial of prussic acid, Edmund Jervis. You can take your choice."

Changed in every feature, the face of Charles Lester glowed vividly in the light, as he held the phial toward the kneeling man. His eyes shone with a sinister glare, while a smile lingered on his lips.

"But this is murder," gasped Edmund Jervis. "Del-i-ber-a-t-e mur-der!"

"Bah! The cowardice of this man fills me with loathing!" exclaimed Charles, as though speaking to himself. "When the dishonor of an innocent woman is in question, he does not tremble. When his lips blaspheme his God, he is not afraid. But after twenty years of crime—whose very vileness might make a devil ashamed to be outdone by a paltry mortal—this man shudders and cringes when the

mere temporal judgment of his sins stares him in the face."

And as these words passed the lips of the Unknown, a strange thought entered his brain.

He turned to the sofa, and surveyed the face of the Magnetized girl.

"Arrayed for the sacrifice," he exclaimed — "and with a cross upon her bosom. Wretch! Wretch! Is nothing sacred in your eyes?"

These words were accompanied with a glance toward the kneeling man.

Charles silently advanced to the sofa. His eyes became large and intensely bright as he took the hands of the girl within his own.

And then a breathless stillness fell like a palpable presence upon that vast and luxurious chamber.

"This power called Magnetism, has been used by wretches as base as you, for their own base deeds. Once this night, have I turned its awful influence to a good purpose. The lips of this girl spoke of one dark deed in your life, and at my Will. Now from her lips you shall learn the sentence of your crime. Yes, with the grosser senses sealed in the sleep of Magnetism, while her Soul soars serenely beyond the world of matter, this girl — this child of want and poverty — shall hear the story of your crimes, and speak your Judgment."

CHAPTER THIRTY-SIXTH.

THE JUDGE BETWEEN THE LIVING AND THE DEAD.

As he spoke, Fanny slowly arose, and stood before the Unknown, her form dilating in every inch of its stature.

Her face became unnaturally pale — her eyes shone with more than mortal light.

And that countenance, pale and beautiful, was relieved in every marble-like lineament by her dark hair.

She gently clasped her hands. The cross upon her bosom rose and fell with the movements of her bosom.

"I am a woman," she said, in a voice whose accents slow and distinct, pierced the heart of the kneeling man: "And to woman in her purest moments has God given the power to judge of her sister's wrongs, and the power to pronounce the judgment upon the author of

those wrongs. Speak! I will hear and judge between the living and the dead."

"No — no — do with me what you will," faltered Edmund Jervis, "anything but this ordeal."

But Charles Lester, unheeding his words, sank on his knees before the girl, while his face was impressed and subdued in every feature by a strange solemnity.

Yes, he knelt beside the Preacher, and joined his hands together, and looked up into the face of the girl, as one would look into the face of an Angel sent from the other world, to judge and to avenge.

The scene which ensued was indeed singular and impressive in its slightest detail.

The Brother and the Preacher kneeling together — the girl, pale and beautiful, standing before them, her eyes brilliant with the light of an Entranced Soul — the candle on the mantel flinging its rays over these three forms, while all the rest of the chamber was wrapped in vague shadow.

And then in a low voice, clear and deep, and unbroken by a pause, Charles began:

"Two years ago, there were four of us, beside the fire, in that far-off western home. My father, my brother, my sister! A man came to that home clad in the garb of Religion. Using the very words of Religion as the means of his purpose, yes, invoking the holiest influences of Religion to aid him in his task, he planned and accomplished the seduction of that sister. She was dishonored. Behold the letters which he wrote to her — your eye, gifted with a divine sight, can freely trace these characters, breathing Religion and Love — characters traced by the seducer's hand. But he married my sister. Married her, and when his brutal appetites were satiated with her loveliness, this seducer blasted her name by a printed Lie. Blasted her, and left her, to sink withered and heart-broken into an untimely grave, with the fruit of her betrayed love, dying as she died, and buried with her, when the coffin-lid closed over her face forever. I accuse this man, — — —, otherwise called Edmund Jervis, of this wrong. You are a woman, a virgin. Your unpolled heart is at the present moment, soaring in a world unknown to the gross eyes of flesh. And of this virgin Soul, now in communion with spirits of

a better world, I do demand the sentence of this Seducer, who has added Dishonor to Sacrilege, and Perjury to Murder."

As Charles uttered these words, Edmund Jervis clutched the package of letters, while his haggard face betrayed the very apathy of despair. This power of Magnetism which he had so often used for the accomplishment of his evil deeds, was now transformed into the instrument of Retribution. He was silent; he had no word with which to answer the accusation; he could only gaze upon the pale face of the girl, illumined by eyes transcendently brilliant, and await the words of Judgment from her lips.

Only once her lips unclosed:

"Death!" she said, and was silent.

"But this is not all. A little while after the daughter was buried, her father, who never spoke one word of gladness after her death, but kept his sorrow sealed from all eyes—sacred to the eye of God—her father was gathered to her grave. Murdered also by the Seducer—struck by the same shaft which pierced the heart of his child. They sleep together, yonder, under the winter snow. You know the ties which bind a child to the father, and the father to the child. You can judge of the agony which rends the father's heart, who is heart-broken by his daughter's shame. Again, I ask his Sentence from your lips."

Once more the lips of the Entranced Girl unclosed:

"Death," she murmured.

"There was a brother. My twin-brother, John Lester. While pursuing this desolator of our home,—while engaged in tracking him step by step, over the Union, and searching for his real name, under the score of false ones which he bore—my brother was struck with pestilence. He died not more than three months after his sister and his father slept in one grave. He was the third victim of———otherwise called Edmund Jervis. You are a sister: reared in poverty and want, perchance your heart still clings to your brother. Judge between me and the murderer of mine!"

"Death!" was for the third time the response of the Entranced girl.

The Preacher was yet silent. His head began to droop—the package of letters fell from his hand.

"This is not all. I, the last of the four—the only one remaining of the circle which gathered around the fireside of our far off western home, two years ago—I bear the seeds of death within me. I feel within me, a Prophecy of the grave to which I am silently hastening. It is not a disease of the body which gnaws even now at my heart-strings. Two years ago, strong in every iron sinew, my veins full of life and my heart beating with the hopes of usefulness and honorable exertion—behold me now! Read the prophecy of death, in these livid prints upon each cheek—hear it in the ceaseless voice which is sounding within my heart, telling me, that I am doomed. That I must die. That no human hand can stay the hour of my fate. That I must die, inch by inch, like sister and father of a broken heart. A heart frozen by the memory that never leaves me by night or day. And for my life thus wrecked in its dawn—for my heart thus palsied in its very morn of hope—for my mind chafed into madness and my soul blasted by this Blasphemer's crime—I demand a Judgment from your lips. Speak! I am the last of four."

Once more the slow moving lips uttered the solitary word "Death!"

And at this word Charles Lester turned toward the Preacher.

"If you have anything to say, now is the moment for its utterance. But remember—the sentences which you are about to speak, are *your last words*."

The look which impressed the livid face of the Unknown said more than his words. Beneath his eyes, bright with unnatural lustre, appeared those circles of livid blue—those silent Prophecies of his untimely Death.

"Hear me," cried the Preacher, finding words at last: "Hear before you condemn. To-night I have felt as I have not felt before for twenty years. Place yourself in my condition, as I began life twenty years ago. Elevate yourself into a pulpit—see the mass adore you, not in words, but in fact, as though you stood in the place of God. You are a Popular Preacher. At the time when your mind is ripening into shape, you are intoxicated by all the odors of popular flattery. Beautiful women seek life eternal at your hands. Old men thrust you in the way of temptation—

your home is amid the very secrets of their firesides. Their daughters look up to you, a young man, with a reverence that amounts to adoration. Husbands entrust you with the honor of their wives. The pulpit, the press, the home ring with your praises. Paint this position with your own fancy—invest it with all the temptations that ever glittered before the eye of man—imagine that you, yourself were the Preacher, and I the Brother—and then answer me, whether a life dawning like mine, could find its ripening in anything but the lust of the Sensualist, the cold unbelief of the Atheist.”

He started to his feet, and continued with an irregular voice and violent gestures :

“No — No ! I am not answerable for my crimes. I am what I am. And what I am, the religion of society has made me. That religion fashions ‘the popular preacher.’ It takes the dreamy boy, whose passions are just passing into development. It plunges him into temptation. It elevates him, for a few sounding words, uttered in a pulpit, at a Revival or by the Mourner’s bench, into a mock god-head. It rouses all that is base and sensual in his heart. It brings him into contact with the wife, the daughter, the sister, and at the very moment, when their minds, excited by Religion, (or what passes for Religion) behold in him, not a man—like the husband, the father or the brother—but a God, clad with the powers of Heaven and hell. Is it strange that this Man thus elevated above his fellows, should yield to temptation ! Is it a wonder that the occasional temptation should become a fixed habit ? Is it beyond your power of belief, that the wine-cup should sometimes be needed to restore the energies exhausted by the work of the pulpit ? Or, that the Popular Preacher, dizzy with the delirium of religious idolatry, should end at least, in what I am ? No, Sir—you cannot judge me ! I fling back into society my crimes, and demand that it shall answer for the result of its own Work !”

Striding wildly up and down the carpet—his voice rising and falling with all the intonations of his best moments in the pulpit—Edmund Jervis uttered these words, while his face glowed into new youth, and his chest swelled with strong emotion.

Charles Lester surveyed him in silent wonder. The very tones of the man, as we have said before, were invested with an awful power. In a word his tones were to his words, what exquisite facility of rhyme is to the Poet. They melted—they wrung—they terrified—they conquered you by turns.

And even now the Brother felt his heart stirred into involuntary compassion by the very accents of the Preacher.

It cost him an effort to recover his composure :

“Your tones might deceive me, Sir, did I not remember, that they were the means of my sister’s shame,” he said and confronted the Preacher in his hurried walk : “Come, Sir, we lose time. I have tracked you to this chamber of your secret devotions, for an especial purpose. That purpose has received a sacred sanction from the lips of this unpolluted child. Yes, the very maiden whom you destined for my sister’s bed and for my sister’s grave has pronounced your sentence. That sentence is Death, at my hands and now.”

He spoke with a terrible calmness. Standing face to face with the Preacher, he surveyed him with an unfaltering but by no means malignant gaze. At the same time he held the phial to his lips and the pistol to his breast.

The eye of the Preacher rolled wildly about the room, as though he sought for some avenue of escape.

The girl was yet standing there, her pale face and burning eyes reflected in the mirror.

“You cannot escape,” whispered Charles : “All that remains to me of life, I have dedicated to this work. I give you choice of the manner of your death. But die you must and now. You will never leave this room alive.”

Every word penetrated the heart of Edmund Jervis, like the pang of a mortal wound.

“Have you no mercy ?” he faltered, as he shrunk back from the phial which glittered in the light.

“Yes,—such mercy as dictated the letter which you wrote to the Editor of a Philadelphia Daily Paper,” returned Charles, with a smile.

The Preacher was conscious that he was in the power of a Madman. A Madman who was sane on all questions save one ; and that his sister’s wrongs, her shame, her death.

And at that moment, all the scenes of his own life, seem rising from chaos and passing in rapid succession before the eyes of the Preacher. He attempted to frame a prayer, but the first syllable died in his throat.

His face changed color. Innumerable small wrinkles encircled his eyes. He looked like a man who has passed in a moment the space which divides Youth from old Age.

He took the phial without a word, and pressed its slender neck to his lips.

The pale silent girl stood near, her eyes shining with the fathomless brightness of Trance.

Before him, the Brother, whose eyes, deep sunken beneath the brows, shone with the fire of an irrevocable Will.

"Go," whispered Charles, "Go" — pointing his hand upward, "and with all your sins upon your head."

MEMOIRS OF A PREACHER.

PART SECOND AND LAST.

CHAPTER FIRST.

"SQUASHAHOGANY."

At this moment let us change the scene. Passing through the thick walls which divide the rooms of Brother Caleb's house, let us enter yonder large chamber, on the first floor, where the light of wax candles falls upon the faces of Brother Caleb and his midnight guests.

After a while we will trace the fate of poor Ralph, whom we left hanging on the lattice, with the tin-box under his arm.

For the present our history calls us to the large chamber on the first floor—the chamber which is connected by folding doors, with the room described by Fanny, in her *Magnetic Revelation*.

A single thought should be borne in mind, while you peruse the scene which follows. Do not blame us, if you discover that our description of the personal appearance of these thirty guests, is vague and sketch-like. We dare not paint their portraits at full length. We should be charged with the use of undue personalities. A hundred gentlemen in Third, in Chesnut, and in Market streets, would swear that these thirty guests, so lightly outlined, were intended as their own personal portraits.

Lift the curtain then, and let us take a hasty glance at Brother Caleb and his guests.

Brother Caleb sat at the head of the table, stark and grim in his blue coat and snow-white vest. One hand grasping a pen, rested upon a parchment, near an ink-stand. The other held a long necked glass, glittering with amber-colored wine.

And Brother Caleb's protruding eyes, lighted with faint lustre, as he surveyed the faces of

his midnight guests. Twenty or thirty persons were there, seated in black mahogany chairs, around a table, covered with a white cloth. And every hand grasped a glass, and near every glass—starting blackly from the white cloth—stood a long-necked bottle, which bore the magic words "*Cordon Bleu*."

The orgie drew near its close. The feast was over. The plates of massive gold glittered on the side-board in one corner, amid the broken fragments of the feast. That midnight festival, in which the guests ate, drank, and were merry, without the presence of a single servant, had now attained the period when lights become double, and walls go spinning round.

"What do you think of this plan?" said Brother Caleb, and his eyes ran along the line of wax lights, which shone dimly upon the faces of his guests.

"Capital," said Dicky Bung, making a desperate effort to fill his glass.

"Good, very good," said the lean Quaker, trying to look steadily at the candle before him.

"Excels everything of the kind," said a prim citizen, with demure face and neatly curled hair—"The Grand Subterranean Squashahogany Copper Mining Company! Here's to the President, Caleb Goodleigh, Esquire, and here's to the thirty original stockholders!"

And the very respectable gentleman emptied his glass, and arranged his shirt collar, which was very high and white and stiff.

"It's good—good I say," said a pompous gentleman with red whiskers, and scarlet face: "It'll go ahead o' Multicaulis!"

Sooth to say, the corpulent gentleman was very drunk. He made a well-intentioned effort

to pour out the candle, and drink from the silver candle-stick, and then, as if conscious that something was wrong, gazed sleepily about him with leaden eyes.

And thus the midnight guests spoke out, one by one, or in chorus, concerning the Grand Subterranean Squashahogany Copper Mining Company, until it was the turn of the last person at the end of the table. That last person was a jocund dame, dressed in the height of fashion—with a kind of matronly coquetry about her—and with a small white hand, glittering with rings, which kept up a perpetual motion between her bottle and her glass. Her eyes grew brighter as she suffered the champagne to glide over her lips, but her voice was clear and sweet, and even as a bell.

"What do you think of the plan, Mrs. North?" asked Brother Caleb, from the head of the table.

"We have discussed it so long, that I am really sick of the subject. Our names are signed; that is sufficient. We will make money. What those who come into the company after us will make, is another question. By the bye, Mr. Goodleigh, I would like to resume that little argument with you, concerning a First Cause. Do you really believe in a First Cause? You remember the remark of Baron Holbach—"

Mrs. North's white teeth smiled between her red lips, as the amber-colored liquor glided down her throat. Mrs. North was a widow, a lady of property, and a Philosopher. Some people were so queer as to believe in a God—as for her own part, she couldn't. Mrs. North was a learned woman.

"I will not argue with you, my dear Madam, as to a First Cause," said Brother Caleb, while his thin lips were agitated by a smile—"But you must not deny the existence of a Devil. Any one conversant with mankind (for your sake I will not add *woman-kind*) must believe in a Devil at all events. By the bye, where's Scissleby?"

At this query a general clamor rose. The name of Scissleby was shouted by twenty voices at once. But no Scissleby appeared.

"He was to puff our copper stock in his paper," said Dicky Bung, with a hiccup—"And now he's cut us! It isn't the fair thing."

And twenty other voices said that it was not the fair thing. The prim gentleman, the lean Quaker, the rotund gentleman, and seventeen others.

"Here I am," said an unearthly voice from under the table—"What—do—you—want? Copy, always copy? I say, is the Steamer in?"

Poor Scissleby! Prostrate beneath the table, his long limbs entangled somewhere under Bung's chair, his mind was roaming in the fairy world of the Daily Copper. Even amid the delirium of champagne he heard an imaginary "Devil" crying for copy: with his head swimming like a humming top, he still had sense enough to ask the oft-repeated question—Is the steamer in?

"Good for Slinkum," remarked Bung, as he spilled the contents of a glass over his blue scarf: "Make an item somebody for the Daily Copper. 'Drunk, but still attentive to business. Who? Slinkum Scissleby.'"

Scissleby groaned beneath the table.

"What do you think of the plan, sir?" said Brother Caleb, turning to a portly gentleman by his side—"You are connected with the police department of this great city. Of course you have many opportunities of studying human nature: You can estimate the amount of interest which the mass of people will take in this scheme; you can measure the—"

"Amount o' pop'lar gullability," said the portly gentleman, whose red neckchief looked pale beside his scarlet face: "Why s-i-r-r, in the course o', ten years experience, I have come to the conclusion that the Public is an animal remarkable for the size of its throat, and the magnitude of its swallow. Stands to reason, sir, that a Public as swallows our Police system, must have a throat like Mount Vesuvius in the polar regions, or my name ain't Stewel Pydgeon, Esquire, 'Special P. O.!'"

Stewel was slightly affected with the bottle; very slightly. In his sober moments his geography was not of the most accurate character: you might measure his phases of his inebriety by that word "Mount Vesuvius." When quite sober he located it in the gulf of Mexico; slightly elevated he placed it in the Polar Regions; pretty far gone, and he spoke of it as a

celebrated volcano somewhere in "Asia, or Rooshe-a."

"Here is the plan," murmured Brother Caleb fixing his large blue eyes on the sheet of parchment: "And here are thirty names each signed opposite from fifty to a hundred shares. This will give us thirty thousand dollars to begin upon. We can commence working the mines with that. Can we friend?"

The question was addressed to the prim Quaker gentleman.

"Even so," was the reply: "Twenty-seven of the present company will give thee their checks for a \$1000 each, to-morrow morning."

"I'm to have a \$1000 worth in it, as 'Borer General' 'afore the 'Legislature,'" interrupted Bung: "Stewel have the same for his services as 'Puffer along the streets' in Fildelfy; and Slinkum, (now under the table,) ditto for his services in the Daily Copper. Mind that. Us three are on the free list."

"Next week" resumed the Quaker, "thee will buy the farm in New Jersey, where this copper ore is located?"

"I am now in treaty for it," replied Brother Caleb. "The ground once bought, we can issue Certificates of stock and —"

"There are plenty of workmen, servant girls and such like, who will invest their little earnings in the 'stock' of the grand Squashahogany Copper Mining Company. If the Company fails they will loose of course. If it succeeds, we gain. Capital always does."

"Really you are a philosopher," smiled Brother Caleb—smiled all over his pyramidal face, from his square chin to his flat crown—"But there is no danger of failure. The ore yields ninety per cent. Should you like to see it?"

A chorus of twenty voices, said Yes! and Brother Caleb rose from his seat. His tall lean form, attired in the blue coat and white vest, was strongly relieved by the dark mahogany of the folding doors at his back.

His singular face, with its hollow cheeks and great blue eyes, protruding from their sockets, attracted even the drunken gaze of the midnight guests.

For a moment he surveyed the company, who were gathered in that spacious and luxurious chamber. His thin lips were agitated by

a peculiar smile. The dull surface of his blue eyes flashed with momentary light.

"Indeed, my dear Goodleigh," laughed Mrs. North from the end of the table: "A poetical mind would compare you at the present moment, to Milton's Satan surveying his dupes in Pandemonium"—the lady seemed to lose the thread of her thought, for without a moment's pause she continued: "Ar'nt they so very drunk."

Brother Caleb smiled pleasantly, uttered some colloquial compliment, and then exclaimed in a voice that reached every ear:

"That specimen of the Squashahogany Copper ore is up-stairs. I will bring it to you. Excuse me for a single moment."

Twenty voices and more excused him, and Brother Caleb opened the folding doors and disappeared into the next room.

"Copy! Steamer in," cried Scissleby from beneath the table.

No sooner had the door closed behind the tall form of Brother Caleb, than the thirty original stockholders of the Squashahogany Copper Mining Company commenced an irregular and whispering conversation, concerning their mysterious President.

"Rich as Cræsus or Astor!" said the prim gentleman.

"Where did he reside before he bought this house?" asked the Quaker.

"A singular man," exclaimed the peculiarly corpulent person near Mrs. North: "Has rich connections in Europe. Duke of Wellington his second cousin."

"Keeps good champagne," was the emphatic remark of Bung.

"Tell the foreman to send up proof of the leader," groaned Scissleby under the table.

"What does thee think of friend Goodleigh, friend Stewel?" asked the Quaker, looking across the table toward the Police Officer.

But the Police Officer had disappeared.

And as the champagne made the circuit of the table the talented Mrs. North commenced a general discussion upon some abstruse point in Baron Holbach's "System of Nature."

CHAPTER SECOND.

STEWEL AND CALEB.

Stepping across the threshold, Brother Caleb closed the folding doors behind him, and ap-

proached a table on which a small lamp was burning.

It was the large room, described in the revelations of the Entranced Girl.

The lamp emitted but a faint light, and the apartment furnished with all the appointments of wealth and luxury, looked vast and cheerless as the dim ray, flickered amid its splendid gloom.

As Brother Caleb extended his hand to grasp the lamp, his singular face was displayed in strong light and deep shadow. What was the nature of the thought which gave such a marked expression to his lips and eyes?

"I will get the copper ore," he soliloquized, "and *they* will bring me the gold dust."

"Mister Goodleigh, I'm a Poleese Officer," said a voice, and a hand was laid on Brother Caleb's arm.

You may well imagine that this voice, breaking abruptly from the dead stillness, startled even the firm nerves of Brother Caleb into a tremor.

"Hey? what! what! You here?" he said, as he turned and saw the full-moon face of Stewel Pydgeon at his shoulder.

"I'm a poleese offisser, I am," said Stewel with emphasis: "Don't you remember something about a *tin box*?"

Brother Caleb fairly started with surprise. "A tin box?" he echoed—and then recovering his composure, as his lean form was elevated with an air of dignity; "I am at a loss to understand your allusions, Mr. Pydgeon."

"Bah! Wasn't I present at the office of Is'el Bonus when he drew up your Deed for this very house? An' did not you put the deed in a tin box with other valleyable papers. An' did not you say that you kept that box in a small room at the head of the stairs?"

"W-e-l-l!" ejaculated Brother Caleb. "You have an astonishing memory, Mr. Pydgeon—And what then?"

Stewel inserted his thumbs in the arm-holes of his waistcoat:

"Why, I'm a poleese offisser. I aint easily fooled. Now, to cut a long story short, do you remember a ragged devil, as came to pay his rent while you and old Bonus was in confab?"

"I do not," said Brother Caleb, opening his eyes to the utmost tension of their lids.

"S-i-r," Stewel drew a step nearer, "That ragged devil was a burglar. An imported fur-rin burglar, commonly known as Persimmon Jake."

"A-h-h!" ejaculated Stewel, and the light slipped from his hand and fell upon the table.

"Persimmon Jake and ten others planned the robbery of your house this very night. I'm a poleese offisser, Mr. Goodleigh, I am."

"And you have arrested the burglars?" said Brother Caleb eagerly.

"No, s-i-r! Not so green as that! Want to ketch 'em in the act, I do. At this minnut, sir, there's ten burglars in your basement story——"

"Ten burglars in my basement story!"

"Two of 'em in the small room up stairs——"

"What do you say?"—Caleb grasped the lamp, while his face betrayed violent agitation.

"And there's ten of my 'special poleese in the next room. In the next room, awaitin' the signal to pounce upon the cracksmen."

"And who is it that will give the signal? Zounds, sir! this looks like a very stupid piece of work on your part——"

"There's a closet in that room, a closet with a glass winder——"

"Y-e-s——"

"Suppose I was to buy over one of the burglars, and put him in the closet, and tell him to holler out the minnit his cronies laid hands on the box?"

"Well? You have done this? Ah, I see your idea. Excellent, Mr. Pydgeon."

"And yit he called me *stoopid*!" exclaimed Stewel, with a proper sense of wounded merit—"Mr. Goodleigh, you'll jist please to take that light, and walk up stairs and see them cracksmen, or two of 'em at least, in the hands of the poleese. My poleese."

At once, Brother Caleb, light in hand, led the way from the room.

In a second, he was passing along the wide entry, with Stewel following at his heels.

Brother Caleb's face displayed considerable anxiety, while Stewel's was agitated by a succession of singular contortions.

"You'll find your tin box as safe as a bug in a rug, and the thieves in the hands of my poleese."

Brother Caleb ascended the wide stairway

without a word. At the head of the stairway was the passage leading to the room, and at the commencement of the passage appeared the door of another room.

"My poleese is here!" whispered Stewel. "Don't you hear 'em whisperin'? Push on!"

Brother Caleb led the way along the passage, whose floor was covered with a thick carpet. In a moment, he stood at the door of the small chamber. It was closed. Stewel remarked that his hand trembled, as it encountered the silver knob.

"I hear no sound," whispered Caleb—"all is still. Do you think your police have secured the thieves?"

"Push open the door. In a minute all will be 'self evident,' as Tom Jefferson remarks in one o' his epistolatory letters."

Brother Caleb opened the door, and his light flashed over the walls of the small chamber. At a glance the whole scene was revealed. The closet door was open; the lid of the desk was raised; the closet was vacant; the tin box had disappeared from its appropriate pigeon-hole.

Stewel caught a glimpse of Brother Caleb's face. It was white as a shroud. The eyes rolled wildly in their sockets.

'Ruined!' he ejaculated, "ruined, by——" and would have fallen to the floor, had it not been for the extended arm of Stewel.

"Keep a stiff upper lip, man," suggested the police officer. "You forgit that my poleese is on hand. What'll you bet that they aint got the thieves and the tin box in yonder room?"

"Go—on!" cried Brother Caleb, wildly waving his right hand: "Do not lose a minute! Quick! quick!" He pointed toward the door.

Leaving him alone, Stewel left the small apartment, and hurried toward the room at the head of the stairs. The short time which elapsed during his absence seemed an age to Brother Caleb.

"Ruined! ruined!" he ejaculated, his blue eyes flashing with a maniac's glance; "Ah! This is some infernal plot! Where is Jervis all this while? Can he have anything to do with the disappearance of the tin box? Why does this Police Officer delay?"

Stewel crossed the threshold as the last word fell from his lips. Stewel's visage was per-

fectly blank. He approached Brother Caleb without speaking, his hands in his pockets and and his nether lip between his teeth. There was a singular vacancy in his glance; he looked very much like a man who is just one minute too late for the steamboat.

"Well, w-e-l-l!" gasped Caleb.

"W-e-l-l!" echoed Stewel, in a prolonged tone, which terminated in a low whistle.

"Speak! You are not dumb! Your officers—where are they?"

"Sold," responded Stewel, "Reg'larly sold. That's the sum total. My poleese aint there, Mister Goodleigh. Nor the thieves, nor the tin box. I'm reg'larly sold, I tell you."

"Scoundrel!" shouted Brother Caleb, making a dash at Stewel's red cravat: "What have you done? This is your plan to entrap the robbers, is it? Do you know that that tin box is worth more than life to me? By—— I could brain you as willingly as I ever crushed a snake with the heel of my boot."

"Don't swear," responded Stewel, cautiously retreating from the enraged man, as he put himself into a pugilistic attitude. "And don't lay hands on me. Tech me, and you tech the L-a-w! Could I help it, if my poleese did not come accordin' to 'p'intment? Th' amount o' th' thing is jest this. The thieves has been here. They have murdered the boy whom I placed in that closet. They have made off with the tin box. I tell you we're sold all round."

"And so you did not assure yourself of the presence of your police, at the time when you placed your spy in the closet?" exclaimed Goodleigh with suppressed rage.

"Course not. 'Spose I'm green? Among my poleese was one or two o' th' cracksmen, who'd 'ave been sure to cut my throat if they suspected I was at the head o' th' business. You see the thieves hate me like p'ison."

"If I understand you right," slowly remarked Brother Caleb, "your police came here in company with the two robbers, as robbers? This is a mysterious affair, Mr. Pydgeon. It may cost you your situation. Do you comprehend me?"

This threat, made with due emphasis, did not seem to frighten Stewel quite out of his senses.

"Can't say as I do. You wouldn't go to

make a complaint to the City authorities? Gammon! Emphatically gam-mon! You want your tin box, I calc'late. Question is—how shill you git it?"

These words seemed to have made an impression on Brother Caleb. Shaking in every gaunt limb with agitation, he passed his hand over his brow, and for a moment, seemed buried in thought.

"Bring me that box before to-morrow night," he said, raising his head, "and I will give all the money which it contains. The papers—private papers relating to my family—are all that I care about."

"How much money did you say was in the box?"

"Fifteen thousand dollars, more or less."

Stewel started back as though he had been shot.

"Fif-tee-e-n thousand!" he echoed, and then relapsing into thought, muttered to himself—*"Mister Charles Augustus Milliken, I do wonder where you air about this time!"*

"Speak, do you think you can recover the box?" asked Brother Caleb with great eagerness.

"Who knows? There's no harm in tryin'—"

"Hush! Do you hear that?" exclaimed Caleb, elevating his hand with a gesture of caution—"Voices in the entry yonder—foot-steps too! H-u-s-h! The thieves are in the house yet."

The noise proceeded from the passage leading from the small chamber toward the wing of the mansion.

It was now Stewel's turn to be surprised. This noise did not enter into his calculations.

"Wonder what it can be?" he muttered—"It can't be young Milliken a-tryin' to get out o' th' house? He's had a half an hour and more already."

"What are you saying?" whispered Brother Caleb: "Do you hear that?"

The sound of a key turning in the lock, broke harshly on the stillness.

Shading the light with one hand, Brother Caleb motioned with the other to Stewel, and Stewel accordingly crept quietly behind Brother Caleb.

The door was opened, and a beautiful girl,

clad in a dark cloak, crossed the threshold. Her eyes flashed with spectral radiance from a face white as snow.

By the hand she led a blindfolded man, who exclaimed as he crossed the threshold, and entered the small chamber—

"Remember your promise! Don't harm me! I'll be quiet and obey."

You may imagine the surprise which dilated Brother Caleb's eyes, as he saw his friend, the Preacher, led blindfolded across the floor, by the hand of the very girl whom he had led from Church.

Stewel, peeping over the shoulder of Brother Caleb, beheld the face of the girl, and cried with an oath—"A ghost, or my name's not Stewel Pydgeon!"

Advancing with a hurried step, Caleb laid his hand on the Preacher's arm; the girl did not seem to behold him. Her eyes, dazzlingly bright, were fixed on vacancy.

"Don't harm me," whispered the Preacher, trembling all over: "You know your promise. At her request you spared my life. I'm to go with you, from the house, and to go out west, to Ellen's grave. Don't harm me."

"Why Jervis!" cried Brother Caleb, "What's this? A little melo-drama of your own getting up?"

As he spoke, a form advanced from the background, a young man clad in a bearskin over-coat, with a fur cap drawn over his eyes.

"Let us pass. This matter does not concern you," said the young man, confronting Brother Caleb.

And at the same moment, the young man's arms were pinioned from behind, and the voice of Stewel was heard, as his round face appeared over the young man's shoulder:

"Got him, Goodleigh! The thief! Hur-ray for the tin-box, I say!"

CHAPTER THIRD.

THE BURGLAR AND THE GUESTS.

"What! am I free?" cried the Preacher, tearing the bandage from his eyes, and at one glance surveying the face of the girl—the gloomy visage of Goodleigh—and the form of Charles Lester, pinioned by the arms of Stewel Pydgeon:

"Yes; that's right. Seize him! A thief! a robber! He was about to murder me!"

And in his delight the Preacher fairly danced over the carpet. Poor Fanny, still in the Magnetic state, stood like a statue, covered with a drooping cloak, her face glowing in the faint light.

"Now, sir," said Caleb, "will you have the goodness to name your accomplices, and to restore the tin box which you took from this desk?"

"Where's your gang?" added Stewel.

"A moment, and you would have been too late," exclaimed the Preacher: "With this girl as his accomplice, he was about to lead me from this house to some haunt of robbery and murder."

"If it is not an imperlite quest'on," said Stewel, who in a moment had seized Charles and pinioned his hands behind his back: "Which of you two brought the gal up stairs, the thief or the Preacher?"

"The Preacher!" echoed that gentleman: "Sir, you are mistaken, I am no Preacher. My name is Jervis."

Charles Lester, with his hands pinioned behind his back, saw the tall form of Caleb Goodleigh glide between his eyes and the form of Fanny Jones. Charles was somewhat pale; his eyes however shone with unchanging lustre.

"Will you release me, sir?" he said; "why am I pinioned like a thief?"

"Down stairs with him," said Goodleigh fiercely: "let us confront him with my guests. Perhaps some of them may know this burglar."

Brother Caleb held the light, while Stewel urged the captive from the room, along the passage, and down the stairway. Charles was perfectly still. He suffered them to lead and urge him at their pleasure.

They entered the room adjoining the scene of the midnight festival. Charles was placed upon the sofa. Brother Caleb held the light near his face, and whispered—

"Restore the tin box, and you are free! Hesitate, and I will proclaim you a burglar in the presence of my guests."

Ere Charles had time to reply, Stewel broke in with the words—

"Where's the gal and the Preacher? Say! They'll be needed as witnesses."

Brother Caleb answered him with an oath.

"Do not breathe a word about them before my guests," he whispered: "they do not concern us, neither Jervis or the girl. Now sir," turning once more to the captive, "your answer, if you please?"

"Release me," exclaimed Charles; "I know nothing of your tin box. Release me, and permit me to go my way."

The answer of Brother Caleb was soon given. Turning away, he flung open the folding doors, exclaiming, in loud and angry tones:

"I have been robbed! Yes, my house has been entered by burglars. This way, gentlemen, this way, and tell me what you think of this fellow."

The folding doors were thrown open, and across the threshold thronged the thirty guests; that is, as many of them as were able to keep their feet. Some carried wax candles in their hands, as they surveyed the culprit, and the brow of the pinioned man was soon revealed in ruddy light.

"Look at him, gentlemen," cried Brother Caleb, who seemed beside himself with rage: "This fellow in the bearskin overcoat and fur cap, has entered my house at the head of a gang of burglars. He has robbed me of a tin box, containing the title deeds of all my property. Do you know him—examine his features—there!"

He tore the fur cap away, and the face of Charles was disclosed. The young man, sitting on the sofa, his arms pinioned behind his back, and his visage, the object of the united gaze of some twenty-five pairs of half drunken eyes, seemed to have been seized with a leaden stupor. His face pale, his lips apart, he gazed around with large grey eyes, dilating with an apathetic stare. Indeed, the events of the past five minutes seemed to have completely deprived him of the powers of thought and sensation.

Not a word passed his lips while he was subjected to this ignominious survey.

"A bad face," said the little fat man; "do you see that eye!"

"Desperate villain!" said the large fat man; "looks like a pirate."

"Has thee pistols under thee overcoat?" politely asked the small Quaker: "If thee has, are they loaded? and if loaded, does thee intend to fire them off?"

Here the buxom Mrs. North took up the story. Swelling through the crowd, like a billow of satin and velvet, she regarded the pale face of Charles through an eye-glass:

"Rather an interesting face. Should not wonder if he had been a pirate. U-g-h! It quite makes one shudder."

Staggering through the throng, Slinkum Scissleby, lean and drunken, rested one hand upon the plump arm of Mrs. North, as he surveyed the visage of the culprit with a leaden stare:

"Item for the Copper," he muttered: "Melancholy effect of the perusal of French Novels. Young man caught robbin' a house — volume of Eugene Sue found in his pocket. W-h-a-t!" he ejaculated, as he bent nearer to the accused: "It's the same! I can swear to him! Threatened me to-night at the ——— Hotel, Room No. 92. What an escape I've had! —" with a profound sigh — "Yes, gentlemen, yes, Mrs. North, the Daily Copper this very night has been within an ace of losing its Sub. Steamer in, did you say?"

Mrs. North quietly pushed Scissleby aside, for his inebriation had reached the Mezzotinto state, and he did not seem to know the difference between her hand and a roll of copy, as he pressed her plump fingers in his grasp.

Bung came forward. Bung, with flushed face, curled hair, scarlet vest, blue cravat and plaid pantaloons. At a glance he recognized his friend of the evening party, in the person of Charles Lester. But with a truly Philadelphian instinct, Bung had no idea of acknowledging a friend in difficulty; he never knew a friend whose hands were tied behind his back.

"A b-a-d face. Quite Jack Sheppard-ish. Send him to the Station House, Goodleigh, and let's have a look at that copper ore."

Caleb's lean form, arrayed in the spotless white vest and faultless azure coat, with yellow buttons, towered over the heads of all his guests, as he advanced once more, and confronted his prisoner. The light which Bung held disclosed Caleb's face in strong relief. Ghastly at the best of times, it was now pale, repulsive, cadaverous. His blue eyes, bulging until they were on a line with the brow, and flashing with cold light over the hollows of

his cheeks, gave a marked *individuality* to his countenance.

"Stewel," said Caleb, turning his head over his shoulder, and seeking with his glance the face of the Police officer; "Take him to the Station House."

Stewel waddled through the crowd

"Come, my lark, you'll have to *mosey*," he began —

When the door was thrown open, and a stranger who puffed and blowed as with violent exercise, pushed through the crowd of guests, and stood face to face with the culprit.

CHAPTER FOURTH.

"CAPTAIN BRADBURNE, OF THE FALCON."

"Lester!" he cried, panting for breath, as he lifted his broad-rimmed hat from his head, "I've found 'em, I've found 'em!"

The stranger was below the middle stature — attired in a shabby frock coat buttoned to the neck — and his pallid face was surmounted by short brown hair streaked with silver.

"Mr. Mervyn!" ejaculated Charles.

"I've found 'em, I've found 'em," continued the intruder, still panting and blowing: "You see I noticed you in the crowd at St. Simon's. Saw your eye fixed upon our friend (he named the Popular Preacher,) and therefore I concluded that I might find you at Brother Caleb's house, notwithstanding the lateness of the hour. ——— puts up here, doesn't he, Brother Goodleigh?"

"I do not know you, sir," was the stern response — "Nor do I know this Preacher of whom you speak. Who are you?"

"One of th' accomplices," whispered Stewel, and his whisper was echoed by the thirty guests.

The good Mr. Mervyn was abashed. Holding his hat in both hands, he exclaimed —

"I never had an introduction to you, but as I saw you so frequently at St. Simon's, I —"

"Found whom?" cried Charles, like one waking from a dream.

"Harry and Annie!" and Mr. Mervyn turned suddenly and confronted the pinioned man: "What's this? Your hands bound? This is indeed extraordinary —"

"Harry and Annie!" exclaimed Charles — and the words roused him from his stupor

He started to his feet, bound as he was. His face flushed in an instant; he was in possession of all his powers once more. As he spoke, his voice firm and deep-toned, thrilled the spectators with involuntary respect—we do not say—fear.

“Where have you discovered these children?” he said. Mr. Mervyn, who seemed half crazed with joy, replied as he panted for breath:

“You remember what you told me to-night, at your room in the — Hotel? Well, that rested on my mind as I went home—followed me to church—I was haunted by the idea that I could identify the *woman* of your story, with some woman whom I had lately met, in a narrow court of this city.”

“Profligate old man,” interrupted Scissleby, from his chair: “Met a woman—at his age. Reads French Novels. Steamer in?”

“And going home from St. Simon’s the truth burst upon me all at once. I turned back—went to your hotel—hunted you all over the city—and at last, by a lucky thought, called at this house. The door was open. I am here, and that’s enough, but the idea which has been working in my brain all night, is out at last. The woman of your story,” his voice fell, and he whispered in the ear of Lester, “The woman *Ann Clarke*, is none other than *Ann Jones of Bonus Court*, where I live—”

Lester did not suffer him to proceed:

“And the children?” he said, his voice tremulous with agitation.

“Are *Ralph and Fanny Jones*, otherwise called *Harry and Annie Baldwin*,” was the response of the Home Missionary.

“Fanny Jones,” repeated Charles Lester, very slowly, but in an emphatic tone, as he felt the blood bound and grow chill by turns, from his heart to his finger ends: “Fanny Jones!” his eye with a lightning glare traversed the faces of the company. “The Preacher and the girl—where are they?” he shouted in a voice of thunder: “Caleb Goodleigh you must answer for this. Let but the finger of harm be laid upon *her*, and you shall answer with your blood.”

The surprise of the guests, at these words, was equal in every respect to the wonder of the Home Missionary, when he surveyed the

young man “in bonds.” Brother Caleb alone was calm and smiling.

“Stewel,” he whispered—whispered in a tone audible to every ear: “Remove these persons, the robber and his accomplice, to the nearest Station House. In the morning I will appear against them.”

Turning to his guests, he continued:

“Come, my friends; let us withdraw into the front room. It grows late, and my nerves are somewhat ruffled. We had better postpone all further conversation about the ‘Squashahogany’ until to-morrow.”

The guests were turning away; Stewel laid his hand upon the arm of the Home Missionary, whispering, “Ain’t you ashamed o’ yourself, to go about robbin’ in the name o’ th’ Clergy? You’re the *pious* burglar, are you?”

As for Charles, all the blood in his body seemed to mount at once, and in a torrent, to his head. He did not struggle with the cords which bound his hands, but grated his teeth, as he stood motionless with despair.

“No way of escape! None—none! And Fanny is here, in this house, in the power of Ellen’s murderer. To-morrow will release me, but to-morrow will be too late. Mr. Goodleigh—Mr. Goodleigh hear me—only for a moment, I beseech you.”

But Mr. Goodleigh, already on the threshold of the front room, only replied by inviting his guests to follow him.

“Leave the culprits in the hands of the Police,” he said; “This way my friends.”

“Fanny in this house!” ejaculated Mervyn, who had been thunderstruck by the vague words of Lester.

Charles again besought Brother Caleb to hear him—only for a moment—but Brother Caleb treated him with silent contempt. At this moment, a singular idea, which had been working slowly through the brain of the young man for hours, suddenly resolved itself into a distinct shape.

Pinioned as he was, Charles Lester advanced a single step:

“If Mr. Caleb Goodleigh will not hear me,” he said in a loud voice, “perchance *Captain Bradburne* of the *Falcon*, will grant me the favor of a private interview.”

Why was it that Brother Caleb turned suddenly on his heel? Why was it that with

changed voice, and altered countenance, he besought the guests to excuse him for a moment?

"Perhaps the fellow will confess," he said smiling: "I don't want the trouble of a public trial. If he restores me this tin box, I will let him off. Walk this way, sir."

And Charles Lester, with his hands tied behind his back, walked through the throng, and passed into the first apartment.

And Caleb Goodleigh closed the folding doors, and thus, was entirely alone with the burglar; engaged in a private and confidential interview with the man who had robbed him of his title-deeds.

And the guests stood looking into each other's faces, as though a steam engine had exploded in the cellar beneath their feet.

And Stewal Pydgeon, Esq., made various remarks to himself, to the effect, that he was struck stupid; his time was burnt; he was knocked into the middle of next week.

Amid all this, poor Mr. Mervyn stood thunderstruck, pinching himself slyly to discover whether he was awake, or only dreaming. He made a trifling mistake in his confusion, and pinched Stewal, who looked at him with his large bulging eyes, as though he could have eaten him alive.

"Well," exclaimed Mrs. North, breaking the dead stillness.

And the four-and-twenty guests (six were under the table in the front room, we believe,) also exclaimed "Well!" each one modulating the emphatic monosyllable to his own taste.

Scissleby alone, swaying to and fro on his chair, asked in a tone of piteous entreaty—

"What they meant by looking like stuck pigs? Was the steamer in?"

Five minutes elapsed, while Brother Caleb and Charles Lester were closeted in close conversation in the front room.

Five minutes were over at last, and the folding doors were thrown open. With one impulse the guests started forward. Brother Caleb appeared on the threshold, very pale, but with a smile upon his face.

And Brother Caleb, by his right hand, held the hand of Charles Lester. Advancing into the back room, and leading the young man by the hand, he said in a distinct voice:

"My friends I have made a very sad mistake. This young gentleman is the son of an

old friend of mine, and I may add, of a very rich friend. He is incapable of a mean action. Mrs. North, allow me to make you acquainted with Mr. Charles Lester—gentlemen, Mr. Charles Lester."

The guests had not time to get fairly through one surprise, before another took their breath, and held them dumb.

"Wait a few moments," whispered Charles to the Home Missionary, and then turning to Brother Caleb, he uttered two very simple but emphatic words:

"Now, sir."

Brother Caleb without a word took a silver candlestick from the hands of Bung, and passed through the door-way leading into the hall, followed by Charles Lester.

"This way friend Charles," he said, as he closed the door. The guests were alone once more.

CHAPTER FIFTH.

THE GIRL AND THE PREACHER.

Along the entry, and up the stairs, passed Brother Caleb, light in hand, followed by Charles Lester.

"Remember your promise," said Charles, "Produce the girl, or I will hold you answerable."

And as they stood at the door of the small chamber, in which, as you doubtless remember, stands the desk, Brother Caleb turned his face over his shoulder, and replied:

"I only cultivated the acquaintance of this Preacher in order to throw a gloss of sanctity over my life," he said with a laugh, in which there was also a tremor: "But we will find him and the girl in the Painted Room. Come on."

The Painted Room was the apartment beyond the curtain.

"Find them, and we will talk about the Preacher afterward," replied Charles, as they entered the small chamber.

It was empty. The lid of the desk was still raised, and the closet door yet open. Brother Caleb uttered an oath as he beheld the desk by the light of his candle.

"Do not delay," whispered Charles; "move on, Captain Bradburne."

Brother Caleb led the way into the passage which, lighted by a single window and adorned

by a statue, connected the wing of the mansion with the main edifice. At the extremity of this passage appeared the curtain which covered the entrance to the Painted Chamber.

"Move on," whispered Charles, "no time is to be lost."

In a moment they stood before the curtain; Charles listened with his ears and soul. All was still.

"Go on," he said fiercely: "I will not lose sight of you, until you bring me into the presence of the girl and the Preacher."

And, obedient as a school-boy at the command of his master, Brother Caleb parted the curtain and led the way into the Painted Chamber. There was a scowl upon his face, which he endeavored to cloak with a smile, as he held the candle above his head.

"The Chamber is empty," said Charles, in a tone of inexpressible despair. "They are gone. Whither? Answer me, *Captain*; you must know. How many rooms, with pictures such as these on the walls, have you in this pious haunt?"

"There are four rooms on the third floor—two on the second, beside this; and then there is the garret," answered Brother Caleb, casting his eyes to the floor. His face was very submissive, and yet there was a curl about his lip, very much like a sneer.

"Lead me through every room, and without a moment's delay," exclaimed Charles: "And mark you, at the slightest sign of treachery, I will take care of myself and of you, without a word."

He drew a pistol from the breast of his coat.

Brother Caleb calmly arranged a button on his white vest. "Pshaw, Lester, there is no need of any thing like this, I am your friend. Why do I care for the Preacher? Only because there's such a vein of wickedness about him when he's half drunk. Come, Lester, I will aid you in every way in my power."

Brother Caleb smiled again and reached forth his hand, but Charles did not seem to remark the action. Certainly he did not take the proffered hand. He placed his own hand in the pocket of his overcoat, and did not for an instant, release his grasp of the pistol.

"Go on, *Captain*, I'll follow."

They retraced their steps, and returned to the main building. Caleb leading and Charles

following—of course—they traversed all the chambers on the second floor. Then ascended to the third floor. The light which Caleb held disclosed a range of apartments, furnished with every thing that wealth could buy, or a taste for luxury in its gaudiest extreme desire. We will not stain our page with a full description of all the secrets of that voluptuous haunt. Room after room was traversed. High ceilings, painted walls, beds of down, floors covered with 'Wilton' carpet, flashed in the light at every turn.

"You seem to live in fine style," remarked Charles, as they entered the last room on the third floor. "It must take a vast deal of money—eh!"

"When one is rich and a bachelor, one does not care for money," was the answer of Brother Caleb. "Now, Lester, you must be satisfied. We have searched the whole house—every part, save the garret and the cellar. The Preacher has left the house, and taken the girl with him. Have I not complied with request of yours? Can I do more?"

Charles did not reply until after a long pause. Glancing around the chamber, furnished like all the others, in a style of extreme splendor, modified by taste, he discovered a small door, half hidden by a curtain which drooped from the ceiling. This door, unlike the one which communicated with the entry, was low and narrow, looking like an entrance to a closet.

"Where does that door lead?" said Charles, closely surveying Caleb's visage as he awaited his reply.

"To a closet sunken in the walls," said Caleb quickly. "The old gentleman who owned this house a few months back, used that closet as the depository of his title deeds. He was a great man for real estate. Come—are you satisfied? Let us go below—my guests will become uneasy at my absence—"

He moved toward the door of the chamber, but Charles gently laid a hand upon his arm:

"Not so fast," he whispered. "Caleb, I do not doubt your word, but I should like to examine the contents of that closet. This way if you please—"

Brother Caleb's face was contracted with an expression of doubt and hesitation. He seemed to be very much engaged in brushing away an imaginary speck from the surface of his spot

less vest. As he held the candle above his head, the light fell strong upon his forehead, revealing its marked outline, and giving a sinister glare to his protruding eyeballs.

"There is nothing there," he said — "At least nothing worthy of your attention. Come, Lester; return with me to my guests. They will begin to wonder and make remarks about my long continued absence. We have been engaged in this search for at least a half an hour —"

"A half an hour, or a half a century, I care not," answered Lester fiercely, and a scowl darkened over his face: "Give me the light. I will learn the contents of that closet before I quit this room."

Caleb with an air of deep mortification yielded the candlestick, and followed Charles toward the narrow door.

"The key," cried Lester, as he parted the curtains aside, and examined the surface of the door with a hurried glance. It consisted of a single panel, and was painted in imitation of the rich paper which covered the walls of the chamber.

"There is no key. Press your thumb against the panel, in the right corner, near the top" — as Brother Caleb whispered these words, he stood behind Lester, who of course did not remark the expression of Brother Caleb's countenance.

"We will examine your closet," said Charles, smiling, as he obeyed the directions of Goodleigh: "Very likely we may discover something worthy of notice behind this mysterious panel."

The door yielded, and receded from its frame. Charles eagerly crossed the threshold, light in hand, anxious to explore the closet. The light for a moment streamed over Brother Caleb's face, through the narrow door, as he stood near the threshold, and then all was dark as midnight. The door had closed as suddenly and as soundlessly as it had yielded to the hand of Charles.

Brother Caleb was alone in the darkness of the chamber.

CHAPTER SIXTH.

BROTHER CALEB'S TRIUMPH.

"This trifling door is six inches thick," he exclaimed with a laugh which resounded

harshly through the stillness: "Four inches of iron, woven and welded together, and two inches wood. It opens and shuts by a spring. *My Friend* has discovered the spring which gives admittance to the closet — how long before he will discover the spring which gives him egress? A half an hour or a half a century — ho, hp, Charles, Charles, it is bad to play cards with Caleb Goodleigh when Caleb Goodleigh has all the trumps in his own hand."

With this philosophical remark Caleb left the Chamber, and familiar with the windings of his mansion, descended toward the first floor.

"Ah, curses upon the stupidity of the Police Officer," he muttered, as he reached the head of the first stairway, from which branched the passage leading to the wing of the main building — "Lester indeed is cared for. He cannot harm any one. But the tin box, the tin box, — I must regain it at every hazard."

Descending the stairs he hurried along the entry, and in a moment, stood in the midst of his guests again.

"Pardon friends, pardon this apparent neglect. But this Lester is a wild fellow — son of an old friend of mine — came into my house by mistake — a little affair of gallantry you understand. I took some pains to soothe his feelings, which, as you may suppose, were a little ruffled by the charge of burglary."

The guests were gathered in a circle around the buxom Mrs. North. They were whispering together in a low tone, and with every appearance of a confidential conversation, as Caleb Goodleigh entered the room.

There was an universal start as the voice of Caleb resounded suddenly, drowning the low tones of the good lady,

"La, Mr. Goodleigh, you quite take one's breath, with your melo-dramatic surprises," said she with a mock-heroic gesture of terms — "But where did you leave the young man?"

"Gone home — was a little ashamed of his lark — did not like to face this formidable company again. I saw him out of the first door a moment ago. Bless me, how late! After two o'clock, I vow!"

This was all said in an off-hand conversational way, and at the last words he drew forth a massive gold watch from his vest pocket.

The guests stood gazing at Goodleigh and

then into each other's faces, with a look of wonder that was quite grotesque.

"Gone home," said a voice from the sofa, and Mr. Mervyn, the Millerite Preacher, started up like a ghost—"Gone home did you say? And without a word for me? This is rather strange—"

The good man looked up inquiringly into Caleb's face, as he stood holding his broad-rimmed hat in both hands

"Ah, you here yet?" cried Brother Caleb with a good humored chuckle—"Mr. Tomkins I believe?"

"Mervyn is my name."

"Mervyn—oh, yes I remember now. Said Lester at the door, 'Tell Mervyn to call round at my hotel after dinner to-morrow.' If I do not mistake he has something of great importance to communicate. Will you bear his request in mind?"

He laid his hand on Mr. Mervyn's shoulder in a friendly way, regarding him, at the same time, with a face that smiled in every feature.

"I will certainly bear his request in mind," said Mr. Mervyn, whose pallid face was undisturbed by a single shade of doubt—"Good evening gentlemen and—" ladies, he was about to say, but observing only Mrs. North, he concluded—"and lady."

He left the room. Brother Caleb kindly saw him to the door, observing as he was about to cross the threshold—"Keep an eye on Charles. He needs a friend—he does indeed, a friend like you—good night, my dear Mr. Mervyn."

Mr. Mervyn did not reply, but hurried down the marble steps without another word. This midnight supper party had not impressed him with the very highest notions of Brother Caleb's decorum or morality.

When Goodleigh once more entered the scene of the festival, he found his guests in that peculiar stage of commotion, which indicates that the hour of retirement has arrived.

Various parties of half-tipsy convivialists were hunting for hats and cloaks all along the room, under sofas, chairs, and tables. Bung was sternly endeavoring to bring Scissleby to his feet, if not to his senses. Mrs. North, all cloaked and muffled, had taken the arm of the fat man—the tallest of the fat men—who although very sleepy about the eyes, an-

nounced his intention of seeing her safe through the streets, even to the door of her residence.

And Mr. Goodleigh, bowing and smiling, was so sorry to see them depart so early, and 'hoped to have the pleasure of all their companies once more, at one of his little *recherche* bachelor suppers, before a week went over their heads.'

"Steamer in?" interrupted Scissleby, as lean and very *limp*, in his melancholy inebriation he staggered to his feet. "What, the foreign news? Cotton easy—corn moderate—money tight—Queen Victoria in daily expectation of another —."

"By the bye where's Mr. Pydgeon?" exclaimed Brother Caleb, noticing the absence of that distinguished personage for the first time.

"Said 'twas gotten' *rayther* late," answered Bung—"and the female Pydgeon and the five little Pydgeons would be uneasy if he staid away much longer. He went half an hour ago."

A sudden cloud came over Caleb's visage.

"Gone?" he cried in a tone of impatience. "And I wished to see him very much before he left—in relation to the robbery too. Very provoking. Isn't it my dear Mrs. North?"

But Mrs. North was already making her *adieux*, and Brother Caleb presently followed all his guests to the door, where he wished them "good night, good night!" until they were out of hearing.

Bung and Scissleby, last of all, toiled down the marble steps, Scissleby leaning all his weight upon his friend, and asking incessantly for the Steamer while the Dry Goods Man with a crushed hat and an aching shoulder, heartily wished Scissleby, the steamer and the Daily Copper to the—dogs.

"That farce is over any how," was the remark of Brother Caleb, as he gazed from his doorway, down the wide street after the retreating forms of his guests. "How brightly the moon shines to-night! The street is almost as light as at noonday."

He closed the door, and was alone in that great mansion. His steps awoke no echo as he traversed the hall, and yet the very sound of his shoes upon the carpet impressed him with a sensation of loneliness akin to awe.

He entered the room of the midnight supper.

The candles were burning low; the plate on the sideboard glimmered with a faint dull lustre; the mirrors reflected the ungainly form of Brother Caleb, as he stood in the centre of the scene, his bright blue coat and white vest, only throwing his repulsive features into bolder relief.

"I am alone," he said, while his thick lips imparted in a smile: "There is no spy in the shape of a servant to listen at the keyholes of my house. No—no! On ship board and on shore it's a grand thing to be *alone*! These folks to-night, doubtless wondered at this splendid supper spread before them, without the presence of a single menial. Their surprise amused me. And yet it was very easy. While they were talking in the back room, the people of a neighboring Hotel, took care of the table, and arranged the champagne. Yes, —y-e-s! 'Tis a good thing to *eat yourself* into the good opinion of society."

Talking aloud—a habit acquired by persons who are much alone—he strode up and down the splendid rooms, while the candles were burning fast toward their sockets.

"I have a large mansion, furnished in 'exquisite style,' (as the auctioneers have it)—with gold plate—a cellar stored with the best wines—chambers adorned with rare pictures—blooded horses at a livery stable not far off—have all these, and plenty of funds, and am not so very old a man!"

He surveyed his face in a mirror by the light of an expiring candle.

"Better than all, there is no one to spy out my thoughts, or to listen to my half muttered words. If I want company, why I can buy the best with a good dinner. Do I want friends, they can be had for money. In fact, I consider myself as an individual remarkably comfortable and as well-to-do as any man in America."

He paused in his meditative walk.

"Only two men can cross my path. The Preacher, but he is bound to me by the purest friendship. I feed him, and feed his appetites. This Lester—ah! wonder what he's thinking about just now?"

Brother Caleb smiled. It was a peculiar smile, something between a grimace and a scowl. His wide mouth made a gash in his sunken cheeks—his eyes retreated within the protruding lids.

"The tin box! The tin box! By Jove, it is curious! How slight a thing may change a man's fate! That box must be in my possession before to-morrow night, if it costs me the price of—this house."

Turning suddenly in his walk, he continued: "Where's the Preacher? What has become of the Girl?"

These questions seemed to involve a great deal of reflection. For Brother Caleb, pacing the length of both rooms, hands behind his back, and head sunken on his breast, was silent for a long time.

A newspaper spread open on a chair, at last attracted him from his reverie. He took it up, and at a glance, saw that it was the *DAILY COPPER* of the previous day.

The first paragraph that caught his eye was headed

"ANOTHER MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCE."

Brother Caleb sank languidly in a chair, and perused the paragraph with great satisfaction, remarking to himself:

"It is singular how many of these '*mysterious disappearances*' occur in this quiet City. A man with well filled pockets comes to Philadelphia, and is heard of no more. An item in the daily papers, is at once his obituary and his epitaph. How does he disappear? Where?"

"Really this subject admits of infinite reflection—furnishes matter for hours of quiet musing. But it's late and I must get to bed."

Accordingly Brother Caleb laid down the paper and went leisurely up stairs to his bed chamber, in the second story of the splendid, but still desolate mansion.

In the meantime, while he is sleeping soundly, let us ask, what has become of the Preacher and the Orphan Girl?

Where is Charles Lester, who disappeared through the closet door in the third story?

And Ralph—what has been the fate of this barefoot and half naked ruffian boy?

CHAPTER SEVENTH.

RALPH ONCE MORE.

Once more we return to Ralph.

We left him hanging in the air, one hand grasping the lattice, the other clutching the Tin Box against his side. It was a perilous mo-

ment. Ten feet at least were between the young ruffian and the pavement, the lattice was breaking in his grasp, a ruddy light streamed from the basement story and illumined the shadows of the yard.

Ralph raised his grey eyes to the moonlight, muttering between his teeth, that all was lost, and then cast a glance beneath him. It was not a pleasant prospect. The light gleaming in a flood from the opened door of the basement story, showed the surface of the yard, one mass of ice and frozen snow, with here and there the dark face of a brick, by way of contrast.

In a moment a world of hopes and fears flashed through his brain. Fanny, his dying mother, the Penitentiary, a scuffle with the robbers in the gloomy yard, terminating in a murder — thoughts which we express in these broken words, hurried through his brain like a flood through the unclosed lock of a canal.

"Here's the last o' Jonesey," he cried, and shut his eyes. He fell. Was he dashed against the pavement covered with ice and snow? Did he lay there, a stunned and death-like mass of wretchedness, clad in rags, insensible to the cold or to the clutch of angry hands?

He shut his eyes and fell. For a moment all was dark, a sound like Fairmount Dam roared in his ears, and then —

He unclosed his eyes, and found himself hanging in the air within a foot of the pavement. In his fall he had madly clutched the trunk of the vine. And now, as it swayed and creaked with his weight, he held it firmly with the grasp of a drowning man, looking about him with bewildered eyes.

The light from the basement door described a belt of brightness on the snow and ice beneath his feet. Voices, too, grumbling in half-suppressed tones, met his ear, but no face nor form appeared in the frame of the basement door.

"Aint all over yit," muttered Ralph, recovering his presence of mind: "Brass is trumps always, an' legs does when brass falls short. Fust for brass and then for legs."

He dropped upon the ice and snow. His blood boiling with excitement, he did not seem to feel the cold, and stood as firmly with his bare feet on the ice-covered bricks, as though

he trod upon a floor covered with a double thickness of Wilton carpet.

"This way," — a hoarse low voice came through the basement door.

Ralph did not pause to think, but made the best of his way toward the back of the yard. He saw the fence which separated it from the alley, glowing whitely in the moon. And then, turning the corner of the wing of the mansion, he saw the door which had given him entrance, and the marble steps coated with ice and snow.

"This way, this way" — the voice grew louder.

"Save your necks — the jig's up," cried another voice.

"They don't track me by the nails in my shoes, nor by my coat nayther," said a third voice, and then there was the sound of a dozen pair of feet, trampling over ice and snow.

Ralph, still girding the tin box to his side, glanced cautiously around the corner of the house, and with that glance commanded a full view of the narrow strip of yard which lay between him and the basement door.

A crowd of men, dressed variously, but with their hats brought down upon their eyes, were hurrying from the basement door, up the steps which ascended to the level of the yard. The foremost of the band dashed a lantern against the wall. Ralph knew him by his tattered round-a-bout, and muttered between his teeth, "Blue-jay!" The second person stood for a moment in full moonlight, and, to the great surprise of Ralph, pulled off his overcoat spotted with great white buttons.

"Stewel kin take his coat agin," — Ralph heard the muttered exclamation. And then, still peeping round the corner, he saw the personage deliberately strip his boots from his feet.

"You shan't swear to me by them boots, nayther, Stewel," exclaimed Humming Bird — for it was he — "No doubt you meant it well, when you lent 'em to me, but it won't do, old boy."

But Ralph had not much time to spend in a longer survey of this scene. Scarcely had Humming Bird dashed the great coat and huge boots aside, (both worn over another coat and pair of boots) than Blue-jay pushed him forward over the snow, exclaiming — "Go i Bird! Now's your time to spread your wings."

They were rushing rapidly toward Ralph. Seized with a panic, believing that they had fallen into a trap prepared by Stewel, they were making the best of their way toward the gate. As Ralph stood at the corner of the house, half-way between the basement door and the gate, it must be plain to the most obtuse comprehension, that Ralph and his tin box will encounter the gaze of the fugitives, before another instant passes over his head.

And Blue-jay and Humming Bird were followed by a crowd of other forms, dark, ragged, disguised in all sorts of caps, and hats, and cloaks, and overcoats.

"Brass or legs? Which is it?" said Ralph to himself, clenching his right hand: "If I make a push for the gate they'll see me: if I stay here they'll be sure to maul me, and as for the tin box—O hokey! Won't they make a rash for it?"

One glance toward the approaching thieves, one toward the gate which was at least ten yards off, and then Ralph clenching his hand, turned abruptly resolving to bury himself against the marble steps of the back door.

At this moment his foot touched a dead body, which was extended stiffly on the snow, the blood oozing slowly from its severed throat.

It was the dead body of a Newfoundland dog—a noble animal, whose black fur lay sleek and glossy, in the shadows, against the cold white snow.

And right before the eyes of Ralph, rose a small structure, placed near the foot of the marble steps, and bearing over its gaping entrance the significant words—"BEWARE THE DOG."

To fling himself through the narrow entrance, into the residence of "the dead dog," was the work of an instant. And crouching there, his knees touching his chin, and the tin box resting by his side, Ralph surveyed the yard, as a man in a light house might take observations along a line of rough and craggy coast.

"This is the end of all o' Stewel's plans," said a voice, well known to the ears of Ralph, and Blue-jay paused for a moment to contemplate the carcase of the dead animal.

"He p'isens dogs, plants a nice leetle house breakin' and arter all gits a dozen o' us into a cussed trap. Oh Stewel Pydgeon!"

And the voice of Humming Bird by his side echoed with a curse, "Oh Stewel Pydgeon!" Nor did the name of this respectable dignitary die on the air, with the last accent of Humming Bird. For ten other figures came round the corner of the house—stood between Ralph's eyes and the moonlight—and gazed from beneath their downdrawn hats and caps, upon the dead body of the Newfoundland dog.

"Stewel Pydgeon!" they groaned in chorus.

And Ralph shrinking within his rude retreat, beheld these distinguished faces and stout forms, clad in the very livery of vulgar theft, while the broken sentences of a low muttered conversation came distinctly to his ear.

"Shill we go back?" whispered Blue-jay.

"Stewel may mean the fair thing, arter all," was the remark of Humming Bird.

"Else why did he p'isen that ar' dog?" muttered a third.

There was a pause—the gang of burglars seemed to battle with the panic which had impelled their flight—while Ralph, afraid to breathe, set his teeth together, and began to feel cold for the first time.

A sound was heard, breaking horribly upon the stillness. Was it only the crash of an icicle falling from the roof, or the creak of an unclosing door?

"They're comin'," shouted Blue-jay, "Stewel and his poleese! Run for it, every chap as wishes to save his bacon!"

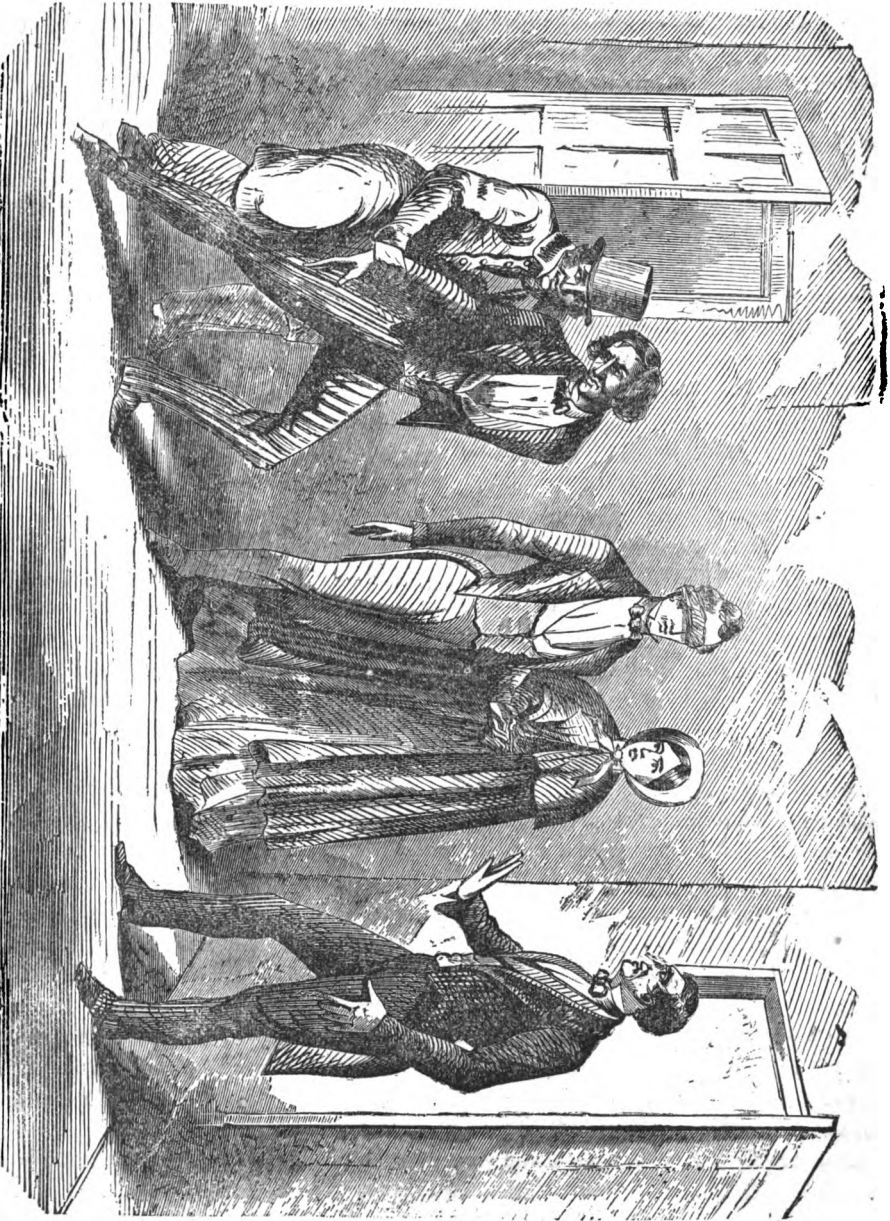
And away over the frozen snow they scampered, until their footsteps resounded from the back part of the yard. Ralph heard the gate creak on its hinges, and the noise of their footsteps echoed from the alley. Echoed, grew faint and fainter, and then died away. Once more all was the unbroken stillness of a clear, cold winter night, with a bright moon shining in a sky without a cloud.

But Ralph still lay quiet and snug in his place of concealment.

"When a-body's well off, a-body had better keep dark," he muttered, and extending a hand felt the tin box, which lay in the straw by his side.

For a long time Ralph lay there, listening with all his ears for the slightest echo of a sound.

BY THE HAND SHE LED A BLINDFOLDED MAN, WHO EXCLAIMED AS HE CROSSED THE THRESHOLD, AND ENTERED THE SWART CHAMBER,—
 “REMEMBER YOUR PROMISE! DON’T HARM ME! I’LL BE QUIET, AND OBEY!”—PAGE 106.



"One, two!" the bell of the old State House Clock rolled over the silent city.

Like a tortoise peeping from its shell, Ralph stealthily projected his head from the entrance of the dog-house. The moon was shining down among the dark walls, revealing every nook and crevice of the yard.

Not a sound disturbed the dead stillness.

CHAPTER EIGHTH.

RALPH AND THE BOX.

"Now for brass and then for legs," he exclaimed, and taking up the tin box crept from the dog-house. Stealthily around the corner, Ralph; with bare feet crushing the frozen snow, toward the door of the basement, Ralph. It is the work of a moment, but the heart of the young outcast beats wildly. One glance toward the window from which you lately made your perilous descent; all is still above, and all is still around you.

Your sister is there, above you, Ralph, but you do not know it. No, ragged savage, or else you would hurl the tin box to the ground, and mount to the window by the vine, and fight for the deliverance of your sister from Brother Caleb's house, against all the Stewels and all the Masked Preachers in the world. But stealthily over the frozen snow, Ralph, until you stand at the head of the basement steps. Sit you down there, Ralph, and quietly endue your chilled feet, with the comfortable boots, so carelessly thrown aside by the Humming Bird. It is done. Now the coat; a warm coat, Ralph, though somewhat large; a comfortable garment, though all too conspicuous, with its buttons of white bone, every one the size of a dollar.

"Brass has done her duty, now legs must do theirs!"

Boots on his feet, great coat on his back, and tin box under his arm, Ralph made the best of his way toward the gate, without once turning round his rude face, with shaggy hair, and large grey eyes.

Arrived at the gate, which wide open seems to favor his retreat, Ralph stands still and hesitates—

"Two ends to the alley," he murmurs—"Wonder at which end the polease is waitin'? Likely at both. Howsomever Jonesey my

boy, there's no time to go back now. Now then for a long pull and a strong pull an' a pull all together, as they say on 'lection day!"

He passed through the gate into the alley, and along the alley in a western direction, toward the next wide street, running from north to south. As he approached this street he took a firmer hold of the tin box, and endeavoured to suppress the sound of his heavy boots, which at every step sank in the ice and snow with a distinct crash.

The street was reached—Ralph stood at the corner of the alley, and looked eagerly around him. The moon was shining brightly over the roofs of the lofty houses, and over the wide pavements, which were alike white and glittering with snow. But no one, not even the phantom of a police officer, was in sight. The street as far as Ralph could see and hear, was silent and deserted.

Whither should he direct his footsteps?

Home to Bonus Court? Ralph shook his head.

"The tin box and my idea-r won't allow *that*. It's my opinion that legs had better carry me out o' this 'ere town as quick as greased lightnin'."

He hurried northward without another word. Clad in the great coat, which flapped and dragged about the heels of his cumbrous boots, being only three sizes too large for him, Ralph followed the street, until it crossed the Ridge Road. The Ridge Road, as every body ought to know, is an eccentric street. Instead of running north or south like any well-behaved Quaker City street, it worms and twists as though seeking for something which it had lost. Starting from Ninth and Vine, it winds and zig-zags away, until it becomes "a pike," somewhere on the outskirts of the city. It is perfectly New York in all its features. Cutting sharp angles, shaving the corners of houses—it would be entirely alone in crookedness, were it not for Old York Road, Dock Street, and one or two others of these eccentric streets, which run pretty much as they please, not having the fear of 'due north and south' or 'due east and west' before their eyes.

Ralph entered the Ridge Road, about two squares above the house of the Fairmount Engine. He had no time to think of "De Fairy"

now, but pushed rapidly onward, following the windings of the Ridge Road.

"Once out o' this village, and, I'll begin to talk," muttered Ralph, when lo! a figure turned a corner, and came toward him with its hands in its pockets. Was it a watchman?

Ralph felt his heart beat quicker, with thump upon thump as the figure came from the shadow into the moonlight.

"It's one of the boys! Y-a-a-s! He wears his hat over his eyes, an' has his hair cut short behind, and wears soap-locks over his ears. Y-a-a-s it's one of 'em. Hello, Bokey, is that you?"

"Why Jonesey!" cried the new-comer halting suddenly and surveying Ralph with one eye closed, in order to give the other a keener vision, "Whar did you gid dat ar wommus," continued Bokey, speaking in a dialect peculiar to the more enlightened districts of Philadelphia. "You look like Matty Van Buren in General Jackson's trowse's; if you don't"—*et cetera*.

"Never you mind Bokey; I knows what I knows," answered Ralph. "I say Bokey did you go to see Woodside about paintin' the frontis-piece of the Injine?"

"Didn't we? I guess we did hoss. Them other boys of the Committee stood like stuck-pigs—couldn't say a word for their lives. But I spoke up to him. Didn't I? Well if I didn't, may I be"—*et cetera*.

"What did you say, Bokey?" asked Ralph, anxious to divert attention from the tin box, which he hid behind his back.

"Says I, says I, Woodside, and says he, says he, *w-ha-a-t*? Says I we want a frontis-piece for de Fairy. What'll you have? says he. Then I told him, 'Paint us de Genius o' Liberty chained to a rock in de middle of the Atlantic Ocean'—says I. An' he's a-goin' to it. Hello! What you got dar under yer arm?"

He saw the tin box.

"G-e-t o-u-t! Don't you see I'm 'ployed by the 'Nited States to carry the mail twixt Fildelfy and Manayunk?"

With these words, he passed "Bokey" and hurried on, at a pace between a walk and a run. He soon came in sight of Broad street, where a gloomy edifice, one story in height, rose like an evil thing, in the moonlit air. A gloomy edifice, covering a large space of ground,

and looking something like a State Prison in its 'teens.

"The House o' Refuge," cried Ralph as he passed on. "Don't git this child in that ar place I guess"—and as though the building awoke unpleasant reflections, he turned his gaze another way, and increased his speed.

"Where shall I go? Can't go out into the woods this cold night. An' I can't loaf about forever with this 'ere tin box under my arm? What shall I do? I should like to take a peep into it, but I can't jist now."

The box was very heavy and weighed like lead upon his arm.

He did not hesitate, however, but pursued his journey until he stood in front of a high board fence, which extended along the Ridge Road, on the extreme outskirts of the city.

A board was loose. Ralph kicked it violently; it gave way, and he passed through the crevice,

Before him rose an edifice of pale blueish marble, which was surrounded by piles of stone and building timber. The roof of the edifice was white with snow.

Ralph stole around, turned this building and soon came in sight of another edifice, compared to which the first was but a hut standing beside a palace.

CHAPTER NINTH.

RALPH AND THE CONTENTS OF THE BOX.

Do you see that vast structure, rising in the moonlight and looking like a vast edifice of snow? Do you behold the massive pillars which support its marble roof? Is it not beautiful—nay—is it not sublime? Around it are scattered piles of timber and stone; the framework over its windows—half shadowed by the columns—shows that it is yet unfinished, and still it towers into the cold blue sky, filling the soul at once with grandeur and awe.

And do you see the outcast boy, who stealthily climbs the broad staircase, leading from the ground to the foot of its columns? Beside that great pillar he is dwindled into a very speck. You cannot appreciate the vastness of these columns, until you see them contrasted with a human being.

And the moon plays upon the marble roof, and upon the marble flowers which wreath

the summit of each column. And a silence deeper than the grave reigns throughout the marble mountain, with its rooms like vaults and its passages like caverns.

Ralph enters the great door of the marble edifice — the door which faces to the south.

A chill like death fastens on his veins. For the place is colder than a subterranean vault. He crosses the passage, from whose marble floor a stairway ascends, and pauses in a moment in the centre of a vaulted chamber.

The ceiling arches above his head. The floor is marble beneath his feet. A silence, whose very intensity appals him, encloses him as a coffin encloses the dead. And through a window, which is only half covered by unplanned boards, trembles a broad ray from the midnight moon.

And in the ray, upon the floor of Girard College, kneels the Outcast Orphan who has been made a thief by a Police Officer of the great city, to which Girard bequeathed his millions.

Hark! A footstep sounds without. Ralph trembles, starts to his feet, looks around, and kneels again.

"It's only my fancy," he soliloquizes, "the watchman's sound asleep in his box, and Girard College is the last place where the 'spect to find a fellow with a tin box at this time o' night."

The box is fastened by a small padlock, dangling from the side. Ralph has no key, and in fact is without the means to break the lock. A lucky thought seizes him.

"This is Stewell's coat, and it 'ud be queer if there wasn't nothin' like a knife in its pockets."

Plunging his hand into the capacious pockets of the coat, Ralph presently drew forth a bunch of keys, a jack-knife and a file. With the file he forces the lock: the lid of the box opens at his touch. Then quietly he empties the contents of the box upon the marble floor.

Do you see him in the moonlight, with his grey eyes growing larger every moment, and his ruffian face stamped in every line with dumb amazement?

Before him lie outspread the contents of the box. Papers, bank notes, and gold in handful. Never a more delicious banquet was spread upon a Banker's table.

Ralph was fairly frightened by this display of Bank notes and gold.

"Wonder if they haint pennies arter all?" he soliloquized, as he caught at a handful of the glittering pile, and suffered it to glide between his fingers. "Gold, rale gold — why, there must be a *thousand* dollars here!"

A thousand dollars was the utmost limit of Ralph's idea of immense wealth. With a thousand dollars he imagined a man might buy the State House and the United States Bank together.

"What shill I do with it? Where shill I put it? Cuss it, but I'm in a purty scrape!"

Ralph rose and paced the floor; every step was answered by an echo, which growled through the vast building like distant thunder.

Ralph, scratching his tangled locks and "cracking" his fingers, wandered up and down — alone — while the golden pile shone brightly on the floor.

"I have it, I have it," he cried at last, "there is many a dark corner under the marble roof, in the cock-loft of this college. I'll fix' the business in five minutes, or my name's not Jonesey."

He gathered up the gold. Not a single piece was forgotten. He gathered up the parchment and bank notes. He placed gold and parchments and bank notes within the tin box again. Then crossing the vaulted hall, he entered another hall as vacant and gloomy, with a tiny thread of moonlight playing through its darkness. This hall was soon traversed. Ralph stood in the passage, or corridor, on the northern end of the building, at the foot of the stairway which, suspended — as it seemed — in air, led to the upper chamber, and to the roof of the College. This slight staircase, built of marble, was covered with rough boards. Ralph clutched the tin box, and hurried upward. It was very dark. A single misplaced step, and he would have been dashed to pieces. At last he reached the topmost step, and stood upon the marble floor in the story of the College immediately beneath the roof.

"Dark as the very mischief; but somewhere here there's a wooden stairs, which hangs on the end o' th' college like a martin box."

He found the temporary stairway after much difficulty, and ascended the creaking steps. He was in utter darkness. His mind became con-

fused; he was afraid, and would have retraced his steps, had he known which way to tread.

He reached forth his hand, and it encountered one of those massive piles of brick which support (or seem to support) the immense roof of the College.

And there, in one of those nooks which at noonday are dark as midnight, he placed the Tin Box, covering it with a mass of loose sand, dry mortar, and other rubbish which overspread the solid floor.

"That's done. Now I'll make tracks for home, and have a talk with Fanny. Somehow or 'nother, Fanny has *idees* which I can never get hold of."

But how should he retrace his steps in the thick darkness?

While searching for the wooden stairway by which he ascended, he was attracted by a dim light, shining only a few paces beyond him.

"The stairs that lead to the roof of the College," exclaimed Ralph; "b'lieve I'll go up and take a look at the moonlight."

Up the narrow stairs, between the huge walls, or masses of brick and mortar, which touched him on either side, he ascended. It was not long before he stood upon that pavement of marble blocks, which forms the roof of the College. That roof, covered with snow, was darkened suddenly by a long belt of blackness—the shadow of Ralph the Outcast, standing under the canopy of Heaven, on the summit of the marble pile.

The sight which met his eyes for some moments held him dumb. The Great City, a wilderness of roofs, white with snow, extending far away in the clear cold light of the wintry moon!

On the east, the broad Delaware shone with a tremulous lustre on every wave; on the west the mound of Fairmount, clothed in a mantle of snow, rose boldly into the cloudless air. Steeples, roofs, towers, on the one hand, and on the other, the country side, whose woods and fields and farm houses looked pure and beautiful in their garment of spotless white. The hills of Jersey, a bleak uneven line, broke abruptly into the eastern sky, while to the west extended a vague prospect of villages amid woods, of mansions on the verge of tranquil waves, and in the far distance rose a glimpse of hills of Brandywine.

PHILADELPHIA was beneath the feet of the Outcast Boy. Embraced by her rivers—the Delaware, flashing broad and deep; the Schuylkill, gleaming like a silver thread—she slept beneath her countless roofs, a vast wilderness of wealth and misery, with the eyes of one of her ten thousand Heathen surveying her every feature by the rays of a cloudless moon.

Oh, you may talk of the savage grandeur of the desert, untrodden by the foot of man, of the awful solitude which invests the traveller, who looks upon the world from the topmost peak of Chimborazo; but here, beneath your feet, is a desert, a solitude, whose desolation and whose loneliness are made up—not of rocks and stones—but of the misery of human hearts, scourged and lacerated by the fangs of a barbarous Civilization.

Look at Philadelphia, as she sleeps beneath the moon, snow upon every roof—is she not pure and beautiful in her white robes?

The outside of the Sepulchre!

Without a garment of stainless purity—within 'rottenness and dead men's bones!'

Pierce their countless roofs; dive into the caverns, which spread beneath that mantle which looks white as an angel's wing; descend into the Sepulchre—What then?

Look at Ralph the Outcast, as he stands upon the roof of Girard College. Yonder in the Penitentiary, which rises to your right—a Bastile that intervenes between your sight and the white ground of Fairmount—there are hundreds of convicts, who one day were Ralphs, and who now, having ripened from friendless childhood into felon manhood, are counting the slow moments of the night, by the irregular beatings of their hearts.

Shall this young Ralph, ever ripen into the Dead Sea fruit of the Penitentiary?

The young ruffian in his uncouth dress, raised his large eyes to the sky, and saw the moon shining there above, with a single star not far away, and then a chaos of half formed thoughts began to break in waves, upon the beach of his barren soul.

Was there a God? Did **HE** love the Rich better than the Poor? Does **HE** care for me, poor outcast that I am—outcast baptized in want and hardship, and about to be admitted into full Communion with the terrible church of crime?

Thoughts like these—of course not expressed in these words—came half muttered from the lips of Ralph as he stood alone on the roof of Girard College.

"I'll go home to Bonus Court, and take advice of Fanny," said Ralph.

Clad in his white coat, he descended from the College, left the grounds, and after passing along Franklin Avenue, for a half a mile, entered a southern street, which led toward Bonus Court.

At the entrance of Bonus Court he stood at last. The darkness of that den, was only broken by a faint ray. A light glimmered from the window of the lower room. Ralph hesitated.

"Wonder if mother's dead?" he said as he entered the Court—"Rayther think Fanny'll be surprised when she hears I'm so rich. Did'n't I *do* that Stewel Pydgeon—G-e-t-o-u-t! Charles Augustus Millikin you're a precious cuss, you are."

Ralph laughed to himself as he looked through the window, into the room occupied by John Cattermill the Drunkard.

While Ralph hesitates before the window, let us return for a few moments to the summit of Girard College. Let us place the young outcast once more upon the marble roof, and listen to a Sermon preached by "a writer of immoral books." You, that wish to pursue only the plot of this narrative, may skip the ensuing chapter. But you that wish to hear a Sermon, with Girard College for a pulpit, will do well to read the words which follow.

CHAPTER TENTH.

A SERMON FROM THE TOP OF GIRARD COLLEGE,

By "A Writer of Immoral Books."

Doth not a curse rest upon the Great City? Is it not better to abide in the shadow of the mountain top, where the air of God is free, where the child learns Religion at the mother's breast, where the calm scenes of unpolluted nature—the valley dotted with houses, the mountain rising above into the sky, the Susquehanna singing on among its mountain shores—lift the heart to Heaven at once, without the medium of the Preacher's prayer or the church's psalm?

It is good to dwell in the free country.

It is good to abide on the mountain side, where the sunlight bathes your face, just after it has left the gate of Heaven. It is good to abide in the vast deep woods, where every flower is a character of Lord's handwriting, and where the summer air and the winter blast are ever singing one great anthem of praise.

But there is a Curse upon the great city. A curse that takes many forms and speaks in many voices, but is, ever—to-day, yesterday and to-morrow—the same. At noonday, in front of the Old State House, it stalks abroad, in the form of the Unjust Judge, who has learned his Religion from the bitter waters of Hatred, and who only speaks in accents of damnation. The Curse is in the streets in these shapes of misery and want, these Lepers of Civilization. It is in the Courts, where the dock swarms with criminals, while the bench is solemn with that Justice, whose sword is sharp only for the poor man's throat.

There is a Curse upon the great city. With the lowly poor in their dens of want, in the narrow alleys where squalid crime drowns the fever of despair in draughts of liquid fire, and in the great mansion, where the revel, bought with the poor man's labor, roars on from midnight until break of day.

It walks into the office of the Editor, the Curse of the great city. It pours vitriol into his heart, and points with vitriol his pen. To stab private character for pay—to pollute the mind of youth with advertisements that give immunity to lust, and for a price, offer to poison the fruit of the Mother's womb—to meet the cry of the poor man's agony, with a sneer—to crush with a pious lie, every hope of reform, every throb of progress—to sell the rights of Humanity for a Dollar, as Iscariot for thirty pieces of silver, sold his God—behold the life of an editor who is swayed by the Curse of the Great City.

Sometimes it is found in the office of the Lawyer. It turns him into a sower of crime, and he plants dishonor so that he may reap gold. With a brain palsied to all sense of right or wrong, with a conscience seared alike to the wail of Humanity or the still small voice of God, with a hand always grasping, always itching for the wages of pollution, beheld the Lawyer, infected by the Curse of

the Great City. Gold! That word over-spreads the horizon of his life. Gold however gotten, gold however won—wring from the widow's palm, or torn from the orphan's heritage, or coined in the damnation of the virgin's heart—always gold.

Whence comes the universal Curse? Whence this universal fever for the fruits of labor, without labour's honest work? Why this eternal combat, between man and man, between weak and strong, and all for the wages of the poor man's toil?

It is because there is no such thing as JUSTICE for you, while YOUR NEIGHBOR has one more dollar than yourself?

Does the Curse result from the *unnatural* association of all classes of the human tribe in a large city? Sad and pitiful spectacle! Is there only one loaf of bread in the world, that you and your neighbor, must take knife in hand, and fight for the right to live?

Does this eternal warfare, engender a spirit of avarice in its last extreme of lust, a morality of selfishness, that can descend into no lower depth of baseness, a Religion that has no more heart than the stone on which you tread, a Justice that, like the Hindoo Car, only moves to crush the weak and rend the poor?

Jefferson, whose memory we will forever wear in our hearts, thanking God who gave us our apostle of Humanity, to say iron truth in the face of brazen wrong, once uttered a volume in this line—

"A GREAT CITY IS THE SORE OF THE BODY POLITIC."

What an ulcer for the knife of the Great Physician of souls. What a canker for Satan to cure with his vast fund of quackery! With Preachers that talk theology while man lies bleeding in the last ditch of sufferance; with lawyers that prate of Blackstone, while the Law of Christ is trampled under their feet; with Judges who whine forth words of smoothest sound, while they pour the miserable and the wronged, into the Alembic of the Penitentiary.

Sweep the roofs from this large City at midnight. Look down upon the scenes: here a murder—there a seduction—yonder a forgery—then a midnight outrage that cannot be named but in a whisper—all crowded together, enacting at the same moment, going

on under this moonlit Heaven, while law and judge and priest, are slumbering sound.

Gaze from the summit of Girard College, upon the great city—the house-tops are uncovered. The Anatomy of civilization lies open to your gaze. Summon the fiends of darkness to your side. How they chuckle as these scenes unclose before their gaze! Then with a voiceless prayer, beseech the Angels, who watch yonder by the Throne, to turn their gaze for a moment only, upon this dumb tragedy, which only manifests its agony, in broken throbs. Look! The tears are falling from the Angels' eyes. Tears of blood?

Yonder at the lonely hearth the widow starves, with her babe lying dead upon her breast. Yonder the bank directors hold their orgie, and plan a new and legal robbery of the common people. Yonder the White Slave toils at her needle, sewing the garments of luxury with tears, and bartering her lungs for a crust of bread.

Yonder glides the Priest, under the quiet mantle of the night—he has just finished some potent sermon—something against "the Pope," or maybe something flavoured with sulphur, upon "Eugene Sue" and "French Novels." Ho! Sir Priest whither tends your steps at dead of night? Shall you take wine with the Deacon, or join the orgie of these smooth robbers, who speculate upon the gain's of the poor man's blood? Shall you, with the odor of pulpit and sermon fresh upon your garments, steal to these Homes of Baker Street, and tell the Lepers there, that the Lord Christ died for them? No—home to your study. The wine is good, and the pen is sharp. Before you spreads the Rent-Roll of Trinity Church. Come—we are waiting. Write straightway a good sermon, in favor of Trinity Church and her Forty Millions of Dollars. But while you are writing, look yonder for a moment, to that lake of Galilee—look firmly, though your gaze traverses the mists of eighteen hundred years—and tell us what do you behold?

"The Christ who has just been preaching to multitudes of the Poor, is now sitting in their midst, feeding these poor with actual bread!"

Is this your answer Priest? Do you pretend to believe in this Christ; you who preach

to the Poor, and at the same time rob them of land, of bread, of the means of life, and of life itself?

But look again from this summit of Girard College.

Yonder in the lonely sick room dies the father, gazing around with a glassy eye, while the children and the lawyers are fighting about his will.

Yonder in his snug room the Judge is sleeping—and there, on your right, the Penitentiary blackens on your sight. That great Coffin of Stone, in which the living are buried. Judge! how many of your victims are withering there? The night is very clear, Judge, and the voice of Abel's blood goes up yonder, from many a cell of the penitentiary. Do you hear it? No? But when you are dying, Judge, shall you not hear it then? Jeffreys was once as brave as you are now. Once seated on the Bench, he talked of "good old English law," and washed his hands in blood. So legal and demure was Saint Jeffreys. How did Jeffreys die? Can you tell, Judge?

Another scene!

A maiden is kneeling at the feet of a rich man's son. He is smoothly clad in fashionable attire; she wears the faded garb of poverty. She has worked so hard, she has worked so long, for a wretched pittance per day—and there is so much wealth, so much luxury to be won by the mere sacrifice of her honor. Even she the poor girl has honor. The Rich Man's son is pleading—she is pleading at his feet, hesitating ere she crosses the line which divides Heaven and Hell. How eloquently he pleads!

"No one cares for you. You work sixteen hours for sixteen pennies. I have money. You talk of Religion—what has the Religion of the Church done for you? You talk of Law, what has Law or Justice done for you? Poor, you must give your life for a crust. But you are young and very beautiful——"

And do you blame the White Slave, that she listens to the voice of Sin, when it comes clad in gold, while Virtue by the custom of the large city, only bears injustice, starvation, and cancered lungs?

But we will descend from the roof of Girard College. The sights that we see, and the words that we hear, do not amuse us very

much. Yet ere we go, let us look back through the shadows of eighteen hundred years, and ask whether the Gospel which shone from the casement of a Carpenter's Hut, shall ever walk in its divine force, along the avenues of the Great City, feeding while it preaches, and transforming the wilderness of despair into a Golden City.

A GOLDEN CITY! Golden with brotherly love, golden with justice higher and deeper than "old English law," golden with impulses born of God, and working for the good, not of the greatest number, but of the whole number?

O, if this leaf which I have written should wander down the pathway of the next century, and encounter the eyes of 1949, how will the readers of that era, living amidst a redeemed civilization, wonder at the barbarous laws and fiendish theologies of the year 1849?

CHAPTER ELEVENTH.

RALPH AT HOME.

"There's a glim o' light inside, but I can't see no one," soliloquized Ralph, as he looked through the window, "Fust of all, I must get rid of this coat and these 'ere boots."

Ralph opened the door, and entered the room of Cattermill on the first floor. All was still. A candle burning fast toward the socket, shone over the comfortless place, but it was utterly deserted.

"Where's John an' his wife an' his baby?" exclaimed Ralph, gazing around the naked floor and walls. "Cuss me, I'd forgot! Did'nt I see John with the gang, when I was in the dog-house? Stewel got hold o' him too! A precious Stewel! Nancy's up stairs with mother, I s'pose. Now for business."

Ralph took off the great coat. Placing it upon the fireless hearth, (he had in his walk from the College emptied its pockets) he threw off the heavv boots, and arranged them on top of the coat.

"Here goes for a little 'lection fire," he said, as he applied the candle to the coat; "I did'nt like to throw it away, a-cause I was so cold. Howsomever it 'ill burn. Look there! John and Nancy are poor folks," he continued with a grimace, "and poor folks can't do without fire. There's a blaze to bring out the Fairy!"

A heavy smoke, accompanied by a dingy flame, began to ascend upon the hearth.

Squatting down like a beast on its haunches, Ralph placed his face between his hands, and—listening all the while for the sound of a footstep—began to reflect calmly upon the strange incidents of the night.

"Sartainly Stewel took me for somebody else. Sich lots of fun as Fan and I will have to-morrow, when we go out to th' College and count them specie and bank notes! Now if mother could only live, we'd have a nice time of it together. Mother! 'Guess she's gone dead about this time, but"—looking to the stairway door—"Can't go up stairs until Stewel's coat and boots is gone into smoke. A precious smellin' pair o' boots them is to be sure! B-a-u-g-h!"

At this moment, as Ralph half stifled by the smoke, was endeavoring to arrange the fire, the door opened behind him, and a form entered the lonely room.

"A great deal o' fun can be got with a thousand dollars," cried Ralph, when a mild voice was heard at his shoulder—

"Mister Charles Augustus Milliken, how are you!"

Ralph looked up and beheld Stewel Pyd-geon.

Stewel in all his plenitude of flesh, with his full moon face glowing over a closely buttoned overcoat; Stewel with a glazed cap drawn over his forehead; Stewel with his hands in capacious pockets, and a cigar in his extensive mouth.

"Come, my young gentleman! Fork over *that* tin box, and then we'll come to some understandin'!"

At the same moment the stairway door opened. The mild face of Hannah, the Millerite's daughter, appeared beside the visage of the Quaker woman, Martha Lott. Ralph, however, did not see them.

He only beheld Stewel Pydgeon.

Rising slowly to his feet, his bony form clad in its rags once more, he folded his arms, and confronted the Police officer. His matted hair encircled the upper part of his face, but his teeth were set, his lower jaw fixed and rigid as iron.

"*That* tin box," said Stewel, drawing a mace from one pocket, and a pistol from the other.

At this moment, a scene of deep interest is progressing in the third story.

The Priest with the skull-cap fitting closely over his brow, and small eyes glimmering from the depths of their socket—the Priest whom Ralph called from the Church of Saint John—is sitting by the bed of the dying woman. Her hand, stricken by pestilence, clasps his wrist as it has clasped it for three hours. He turns his gaze away from that face, made fearful by fever struggling with the damps of death, and shuddering in his dark attire, listens to the words which fall, low, muttered, but distinct, from her clotted lips.

The candle is burning low, the fire has gone out in the sheet-iron stove. The place would be chill and damp, were it not for the fetid atmosphere of pestilence. The Priest is very pale; his thick lips have lost their hues of red, and the hand which the dying woman clutches by the wrist, quivers incessantly.

For three weary hours, he has been alone, with the departing soul. Alone, (for Hannah and the Quaker Woman had retired to the room on the second floor) alone, and yet he has not been conscious of the flight of time. Those three hours in the death-chamber have passed with lightning wings. Many times has he endeavored to free his wrist from the death-clutch of the woman's hand, but never once has he wished to seal his ears to the accents of her Last Confession.

Her face, with dark hair streaked with silver, has appalled him with its unnatural look, but her words have passed one by one, into his soul.

For the Confession uttered by the dying woman was wild, improbable, exceeding in every detail the most incredible creation of fiction, and yet it bore truth upon its every word and tone.

"I cannot believe it," exclaimed Father John—at the moment when we take up the scene, at least three hours since his entrance into the death-room—"You are not speaking of human beings, but of fiends."

The dying woman repeated two names in a clear voice, while her eyes rested vaguely upon the pallid face of the Priest.

"Reuben Gatherwood!" she said, "Lemuel Gardiner!"

By the agitation which pervades the frame

of the Priest, we can discover that these names have been uttered often, and with fearful power, in the course of her Confession.

The Confession we will now repeat, in our way, leaving the Priest and the dying one alone for a little while. In our own way, for the *exact* words of the Confession are too fearful in their character, to be recorded on our page.

While Ralph confronts Stewel on the first floor, while the clutch of that death-stricken hand holds the Priest by the bed of despair, let us look at a Leaf from the Past. Let us look at Tragedy which is enacted every day, but which has never been described in a work of fact or fiction, for reasons that will occur to every reader, after the perusal of the following Revelation.

It is dangerous ground that we are about to tread.

CHAPTER TWELFTH.

THE HISTORY TOLD BY THE DYING WOMAN.

This world of ours has many beautiful sights, but the holiest spectacle which it offers to the eye of God, is, a husband and a wife sitting by their own fireside, while the winter's sleet and snow beats against the window pane. Upon the knee of the wife sleeps a rosy boy, whose tiny hands are folded over his breast, while the light of Home plays over his golden curls and over his face, which smiles in slumber as though a dream was passing before the eyes of his soul. There they are, shut out from all the world, the curtains drawn across the window, the old clock ticking in one corner, and hickory logs blazing upon the hearth, with a cheerful glow and an odor that tells of forest trees, green and hearty with the vigor of the summer time.

The snow lays white and cold upon the fields without, beneath a dull and leaden sky. A silence reigns over the leafless woods, deep as death, and only broken by fitful gusts of the drear north wind. All is drear and desolate around that grey stone house, built upon the side of a hill, with a strip of woodland encircling it on every side but one, and that one side opens through the darkness of night a glimpse of Philadelphia, with a light haze resting upon its wilderness of roofs.

Within the two storied stone house the old

clock throbs in its walnut case, and the hickory fire burns beneath the chimney arch.

The husband sits on one side, with an open volume resting on his knee. His eyes are fixed upon the face of the wife, who is seated opposite, her hands clasped over the sleeping boy, nestling on her knee, while her gaze rests dreamily upon the fire.

The husband is a man of only twenty-five years. He has thrown aside his coat and boots. A loose dressing gown falls aside from his chest, and his feet encased in slippers are placed near the fire. A man of regular features, brown hair, eyes of clear deep blue, and a lip that gives a light like a ray from heaven to his face whenever he smiles.

The wife is a woman, or rather a girl, of only nineteen years. Her form is enveloped in a loose gown of a light azure color, which, with its flowing folds, conceals rather than discloses the outlines of her shape. Along her pale face stray loosened curls of golden hair, and beneath the arch of her brows shine eyes that are as blue as a cloudless heaven. Her hands and feet are small; her cheek pale but transparent as alabaster; her neck elegantly shaped and white as a snow-flake.

Altogether, it is a beautiful picture. You can imagine for yourselves the details of this room. The walls covered with a plain paper, the floor concealed by a carpet of rich warm coloring, the mahogany stand on which the candle is placed, and the mirror which, hung near the old clock, reflects the face of the husband, as he looks into the eyes of his wife.

They are listening to the beating of the storm upon the window pane. As each gust of wind dies away, they are looking into the fire, and from the very coals framing some picture dear to memory. The wife suffers her mild eyes to rest for a moment upon her slumbering Boy, and the Husband turns his gaze from the cheerful fire to the glowing face of his Wife. Altogether, this scene is very quiet; entirely common-place in its character, such a scene in fact as may be witnessed in ten thousand homes by the light of a winter's fire.

At length the Husband broke the deep stillness, which had prevailed for a quarter of an hour, by an exclamation:

"God bless us, Alice!" he said, fixing his eyes upon the fire with a dreamy gaze: "Hc

time flies! Here, in this quiet home, three years ago, we were married. Three years! And yet it seems but yesterday. Don't you remember, Alice, that it was our intention to have been married in the large mansion in Arch street, but you preferred this quiet country seat of Oakleaf?"

"It is so beautiful in summer time," responded Alice in a whisper, as she passed her hand through the curls of her sleeping boy: "and even in winter, when all is bleak and dreary. It is so pleasant to escape from the noise and bustle of the great city, and sit down by our quiet Oakleaf fireside. Then, you remember Arthur, that it was here at Oakleaf that we first met, when we were but children."

Arthur rose and laid his hand upon the golden tresses of his young wife—"Here," he whispered, bending down so that his lips well nigh touched her cheek, so pale and transparent, "Here our first and only child was born, and Alice—" his words were scarcely audible, but the pale cheek of his wife was flushed with a glow like the day-break of a summer day in June.

As he bent over her, she raised her face and looked up into his eyes. Very beautiful it was to see her gaze, as her soul—the soul of the Mother and the Wife—seemed to pass from her clear deep eyes into the eyes of the Husband.

"I may die," she whispered, "Die in giving life to my child. You will not forget me, Arthur? O, how beautiful Oakleaf is in the spring! And yet when the spring flowers come they may bloom upon my grave!"

There was a holy sadness written upon the face of the young Wife, who, on the threshold of the joys and anguish of maternity, spoke of Death with a tear, and yet with a smile.

"Banish these gloomy presentiments, Alice! You will not die before me. And then, Alice, we should always bear in mind that there is a kind Father yonder, who guides the courses of our life, and does all things well."

Look upon this scene with your own eyes. Contrast the face of the young husband, with dark brown hair, curling over the forehead, with the countenance of the young wife, with flowing hair of sunny gold—a countenance chaste and womanly, in which the maiden and

the mother seem to mingle—and last of all, let your gaze rest upon the sleeping child, where the beauty and the thought of each face, is reflected as in a mirror.

Surround these three forms with the sacred atmosphere of Home. Listen to the music of the winter fire as it crackles and sings under the chimney arch. Listen to the voice of the old clock, as it throbs away in its walnut case. Hark! The gust beats against the window, but all within is the quiet, the unutterable peace of Home.

What can mar the peace or wreck the happiness of this Husband and Wife, who find a Heaven by their winter fireside?

And after you have surveyed this scene, and drank in its calm and unpretending sanctity, come with me to another apartment of this mansion of dark grey stone.

Seated beside a lamp, which breaks the shadows of a small room, furnished after the fashion of the Revolution, behold a young woman of twenty-two years, whose jet-black hair and eyes darker than midnight, give a peculiar beauty to a pale face, with sharp coldly chiselled features. She wears a dark dress, which fits closely to her neck, and envelopes a slender but symmetrical shape. Her hand small and death-like, with long and tapering fingers, rests upon the mahogany table, on which the lamp is burning, and her eyes gleaming beneath their dark lashes, are fixed intently upon the person seated opposite.

That person is a young man who seems prematurely old with thought and study. His figure long and lean, and bent as with untimely age, is clad in the Quaker garb. Upon his great coat of shapeless drab, hang particles of sleet and snow, for he has but a moment since passed from the dreary night, into the warmth and comfort of this dimly lighted room. His face you cannot see, for it is shadowed by an ample hat, very broad in the rim, and with fur like yellowish snow. With large hands clasped upon his knees, he sits there like an ungainly statue, his head drooped, as he converses with the young woman in low and measured tones.

"You had a stormy ride from the City?" remarked the young woman.

"Truly so. It is a strange fancy that induces friend Bayne to reside here in the

winter. I even put my horse away with my own hands, for it seems there are no servants at Oakleaf but thyself?"

"I am no servant," answered the young woman, with a proud curl of her thin lip—"I am the friend of Alice Bayne."

"O! Thee sews for her, and she pays thee with food and clothing?" said the Quaker, falling into an ungrammatical dialect, peculiar to portions of his sect: "I had forgotten."

He spoke without raising his head, but his words were not without their effect on the young woman. She colored from the neck to the forehead—her bust small but beautifully shaped, rose and fell with quick pulsations.

"As you please, Doctor," she answered, "I am only a poor relation of the rich merchant's wife. A poor relation is something worse than a slave. I know that."

Silence prevailed for a few moments, when the Quaker remarked, in his whispering way—

"Do *they* expect me?"

"Alice expected *your* father, Doctor Gatherwood," was the answer.

"Ah! My father is palsied, and of course unable to attend to his patients. I have taken his practice off his hands. Why should Alice expect my father on a night like this? Was I not here, in this very house, two years ago when her first child was born?"

The speaker did not raise his head, but his words seemed to create a singular emotion in the mind of the listener.

Her slight frame, from the small foot to the white neck, shook with a violent tremor. Her features grew sharper and more compressed. She hid her brilliant eyes with her death-like hand.

"I remember," she said in a low but emphatic voice.

"Does thee?" was the answer in a lower tone, but with an emphasis more distinct.

These words, *I remember*, and *does thee?* unmeaning as they look on paper, acquire a deep significance from the accent and the emotion which accompanied their utterance. The young woman trembled as she spoke, while the Doctor uttered the words with a sound very much like suppressed laughter.

"Does *Alice* Bayne ever speak of me?" asked the Doctor after a pause.

"Never," was the answer.

"Does *Arthur* Bayne ever speak of me."

"Often. As the son of old Doctor Gatherwood, the friend of his father. And as—" she paused, still shading her eyes with her hand. Yet beneath the shadow of that hand, you may see the thin nether lip quiver with a violent tremor.

"And as—" the Doctor echoed, without raising his head.

"As the able and benevolent Physician, who, two years ago, saved the life of a beloved wife."

These words appeared to give a vast deal of satisfaction to the Quaker. He drew a long breath, gave utterance to an emphatic sound, which neither sigh nor chuckle, seemed a composition of both, and—

"Ann," said he, "thee may prepare me a glass of Jamaica spirits and hot water, spiced with a little lemon, and sweetened with sugar, as it is very likely that I will have to sit up all night, watching for the event which is soon to add another blossom to the hearth of friend Arthur."

After this exceedingly long sentence, the Quaker drew another deep breath and spread forth his large hands upon his bony knees, still keeping his face within the shadow of his broad rim.

Ann did not seem to hear his words. Her hand over her eyes, she sat like a statue, her bosom heaving and her lip quivering.

"Does thee hear Ann?" cried the Doctor in a sharp tone.

Ann rose, and with a noiseless step left the room. Turning his head over his shoulder, the Doctor eyed her slender form until it disappeared.

He was now alone, in that quiet room, furnished in an old-fashioned style, with a wood stove roaring away beneath the carved mantel-piece.

Still he did not change his position, nor remove the broad-rimmed hat from his brow.

"Well—w-e-l-l!" he soliloquized—Truly a Doctor's life is a troublesome affair! Night and day one is the slave of every body who chooses to summon one from the dinner table or the comfortable bed. Arthur here is very rich, and loves his wife with an affection that is truly idolatrous. Indeed they are a comely couple."

At this moment Ann returned, and held before the Doctor an antique silver bowl, carved all over with flowers and Cupids, and steaming with some fragrant liquid, which poetically might be called nectar, but more familiarly is designated "Rum Punch."

The Doctor seemed to gaze intently into her pale face, as she extended the bowl, in her delicate hand.

"Take it Reuben," she said quickly—"Oh! such a headache as I have!" She pressed her unoccupied hand against her forehead.

Reuben took the bowl, and seemed—beneath the shadows of that ponderous hat—to inhale the combined fragrance of rum, lemon, and sugar, with all the nostrils of his soul.

At the same instant Ann glided toward the door by which she had entered, but passed for a single moment behind the back of the Doctor, pressing her finger to her lip, while her dark brows met in a frown. It was a picture. The lean Doctor in Quaker garb, calmly inhaling the fragrance of the steaming bowl, while behind him stood that slender form, with a pale face, darkened by an emotion which looked like the intensity of hatred or of fear.

"Ann where is thee?" asked Reuben, without turning his head.

She glided to the door, opened it with a sudden jar, and exclaimed in a careless tone—"Did you speak, Reuben? I was about going up stairs to see Alice for a moment—"

"Very good. And thee may give my best wishes to Alice and Arthur, and don't forget to say that I am here. Thee understands?"

"Yes, Reuben," said Ann, and with that word she left the room.

Dr. Reuben Gatherwood was alone.

For a moment he listened to the subdued echo of the young woman's footsteps as she ascended the stairs. After that moment was passed, all was breathlessly still once more. The sleet was heard beating at intervals against the shutters, and the wood-stove beneath the mantel-piece sung away, with a low simmering sound.

Reuben rose from the chair, and advancing to the bureau which stood in the shadows in one corner, he held his hand for an instant over a capacious silver pitcher. When he returned to the light again, he held the punch-bowl in his hand, but it was empty.

Bending to the lamp—his face shadowed by the broad rim you will remember—he intently examined the interior of the silver bowl. And at the bottom of the bowl appeared a white sediment, very thin, and scarce perceptible, had it not been for the strong ray of the lamp, shining into the glittering interior of the vessel.

Dr. Reuben Gatherwood uttered an emphatic "humph!"

"Truly his sugar is exceedingly white," he murmured—"only the flavor is very peculiar."

Reuben quietly placed the silver cup beneath the table, and without removing his hat, drew a book from his pocket, and began to read by the light of the lamp. As leaning back in his chair he peruses the pages of the volume, the light shines upon the lower part of his face. You can discover a wide mouth with almost imperceptible lips, and a chin remarkable for its massive outline. The lips move in a peculiar smile as Dr. Reuben reads; a smile which indicative of neither joy nor sorrow, conveys a meaning which strikes you with an unpleasant sensation, but which you in vain attempt to define.

"Truly these French writers are a very singular race," soliloquized Reuben as he read: "Now here is a work by an eminent French Physician, with annotations on the margin by a Preacher of this city. The work itself displays considerable science, but the annotations are exceedingly curious. For instance—" Reuben reads aloud, but in suppressed voice, the passage which follows—

Hark! a cry, very low but full of agony, resounds through the Home. For the first time that sound disturbs the stillness of a Home which Marriage has made sacred to the eye of God. It is the wail of the young wife, who struggling in the agonies of motherhood, is about to give life to a first child. That sound only strikes upon the ears of the libertine to produce a sneer or a laugh. Brutal in his estimate of woman at all times, he regards her sacred agonies, when she is passing from the Wife into the Mother, with cold indifference, or a ribald jest. At this time, however, Woman is a spectacle for the reverence of men and angels. Her love consecrated by marriage, is now ripening fast into the fruit of a New Life. She is on the eve of giving birth to a new soul. She may yield her life a holy gift to her new born babe. She may survive, but volumes cannot depict, after what a chaos of pain and agony. At this epoch of the life of woman, what is the

course of your modern civilization? At this crisis of life and death, too often of *life out of death*, how does the custom of the world treat this woman, who a year ago was Maiden, who has been sacred and sealed to all but the eye of a Husband? It introduces a Stranger into the marriage chamber. It invests that Stranger with powers that far exceed what the most bigoted Protestant attributes to the Roman Catholic Priest. And to this Strange Man, society entrusts the life, and more than life, the purity of the Wife and Mother.

And—

"Truly that is very fine!" remarked Doctor Reuben, when he had completed this passage. "We men of the Medical profession are fearful people. Yet let me read further—

Why should not Woman be prepared by education to fill the place which now is occupied by the Male Physician? Do you say that she is not capable of receiving such an education? The history of the world, the very fact of woman's organization, gives you the lie. How many thousands that are unmarried, or that are widowed, might by a reform in the opinions of the social world, be elevated into the position of Ministering Angels by the couch of Maternity!

"How many!" echoed Doctor Reuben, while his thin lips curled with a frightful sneer—"That is the question? Truly it seems to me, that society might find this out some day. But until it does find it out, the world will wag as usual. Women who are unmarried, or who are widowed, may slave for nine pence a day, or take up the life and the wages of prostitution. But the idea of educating women into Doctors—is it not absurd? The public think so. Is not the public the best judge. Again—"

Doctor Reuben read another passage:

How often have we seen THE DOCTOR, seated in his easy chair, bottle in hand, and a few chosen boon companions round him, telling with many a sneer and obscene jest, the secrets of some Home into which he has been admitted as a professional visitor! As a Student this Physician learned his art by practicing in the huts of the poorest of the poor. As a Doctor he gains admittance into the households of the respectable and the rich. Husband! you are wont to welcome the Doctor as your best friend. Listen to him now, as he tells in detail the agonies of your wife, and for the amusement of his bottle companions, pollutes with every elaboration of a libertine fancy, the dearest sanctities of your Home. Wife! you look to the Doctor as the saviour of your life; he aided you in the hour of life and death; he lifted you from death into life; he saved the child of your bosom. Behold this same Doctor as he leaves your home, and enters the room in which the friends of

his leisure hours await him. Hark! to the laughter as he tells his pleasant story, and turns the anguish of your maternity into a brothel joke.

"This is bitter!" soliloquized Doctor Reuben. "Truly these annotations flatter my profession. Yet hold—here is another note in pencil—"

How many homes have been poisoned forever by the treachery of an eminent, long trusted, and even sanctimonious Physician! Do you blame him, Husband? Reflect. It is yourself that have tempted him. You have placed life, honor, purity in his hands, and then wonder that he betrays them all. If the dark history of women's degradation were truly written, how many cases of lost purity should we trace home to the treachery of a confidential physician!

"Very well!" was the exclamation of Doctor Reuben—"Worse and worse! What will not these Physicians do?"

Doctor Reuben laughed and read on:

There is but one remedy. Respect that modesty which is an eternal barrier between Woman and dishonor. Let no man cross the last and most sacred retreat of your Home. Let no libertine sneer, let no oracular dogma uttered by a renowned Professor, shake you from your purpose. Woman, and none but Woman, is the proper Physician by the couch of Motherhood.

"But thee forgets, my good annotator, that Woman is a being of inferior intellect," was the commentary of Doctor Reuben. "Doth not society think so? Should we not be foolish indeed, did we refuse to believe what society preaches?"

Woman can be educated, and well educated in the most difficult branches of the Medical profession. The day is coming when the introduction of a Strange Man into the Home, will be looked upon as an act of shameless insult to the Wife, yes, as a crime only second to dishonor itself.

Doctor Reuben placed the book in his pocket again, for he heard a footstep in the entry.

In an instant Ann Clarke entered the room. As she came near the light it might be seen that her pale face indicated an effort to suppress a violent agitation.

"Doctor," she said, resting her hand on the back of his chair, "I trust you found your warm drink palatable?"

The Doctor did not turn his head, much less glance toward the speaker, as he replied—"It was indeed pleasant. I thank thee Ann. How do our friends come on up stairs?"

Ann bent her head, and whispered in his ear.

"Ah! indeed—so soon!" he exclaimed, and rising from the chair, left the room with a hurried step.

And then Ann Clarke, left alone, sank into the chair which he had occupied, and clasping her hands, exclaimed aloud—

"God help me! That I should be in the power of a man like this!"

It is impossible to depict the intense anguish of her pallid face. The features were sharpened as with the touch of death; her eyes flashed with feverish light.

"But," she said slowly, "his career is almost done."

She paced the floor with irregular steps—now pausing as if the act of listening, now turning a horror-stricken countenance toward the light.

"What matter," she murmured incoherently—"A life like his only curses the earth. It is no harm to destroy a noxious reptile."

She paused, and glanced around the room, from the table to the side-board.

"The cup, what has he done with the cup?"

Ere she had time to solve this question, the door opened and Arthur Bayne entered the room. His countenance was pale and troubled.

"Go up stairs, Ann," he whispered, sinking in the chair which the Doctor and the young woman had occupied by turns—"Quick, Ann, for God's sake! There is no time to be lost."

Ann hurried to the door, and as suddenly retraced her steps:

"Mr. Bayne," she said with a face utterly colorless, and a voice that trembled in every accent: "I have an important revelation to make to you—"

Arthur looked up with a mingled look of impatience and wonder—"To-morrow, Ann, to-morrow I will talk with you—" he said with a hasty gesture.

"To-morrow will be too late—"

"Ann, Ann, would you have me sacrifice the life of Alice, for the sake of any revelation, however important?" cried Arthur, his face

flushing with anger—"Up stairs at once, and for God's sake!"

At this moment Ann caught a glimpse of the silver cup which the Doctor had concealed beneath the table.

"He has not drank," she exclaimed aloud, wringing her hands, as her face was stamped with an inexpressible dismay.

Arthur looked upon her as one would survey a lunatic.

"Why Ann, what can be the matter with you? Who has not drank? What mean you?"

"Nothing, nothing," she replied hastily: "You know I was watching very late last night, and I am feverish for want of sleep. I will go up stairs without delay. Poor Alice! How could I be so thoughtless as to attempt to converse with you, on a matter which can just as well be told to-morrow!"

She left the room without another word.

The young Husband would have thought strangely of her broken words, and her hesitation, at any other than the present time, but now the extremity of his wife absorbed every faculty of his soul.

"Doctor Reuben is indeed a tried Physician and a faithful friend." He repeated these words very often in a low tone.

Then resting his arm upon the table, and supporting his cheek in his hand, he gazed upon the floor with a look of the keenest anxiety, the most harrowing suspense. The moisture started from his forehead; he pressed his lip between his teeth, and—wring by the agitation of mind and body—even bit his nails until the blood started from his finger-ends.

"If Alice should die!" he exclaimed repeatedly—"If Alice should die!"

For three hours the Husband kept his weary watch, and after a world of suspense and mental torture, he heard a low footstep in the entry.

Ann entered the room—her face was deathly pale.

"Speak," cried Arthur, in the tone of a frenzied man—"Alice—she is not dead?"

"Alice survives," answered Ann in a whisper—"Come up stairs and look upon the new-born child."

CHAPTER THIRTEENTH.

THE HISTORY TOLD BY THE DYING WOMAN.

PART II.

Not many moments after this scene, Doctor Reuben and the young woman entered the room on the lower floor together. The Doctor had assumed his overcoat and broad-rimmed hat; he was evidently prepared for a journey.

"You do not intend to return home to-night Doctor," said the young woman, as she paused near the door, while he advanced toward the light.

"Certainly; I have many patients to attend to, early in the morning," was the reply — "By-the-bye, Ann, will thee brew me another warm drink. Yet hold — come here friend Ann —"

As he lifted the broad rimmed hat from his head, the young woman advanced to the light. For the first time we can gaze freely upon Dr. Reuben's face. The forehead is wide, but the top of his head is perfectly flat. The eyes are large, in color a cold glassy azure, and protruding until they are in a line with his brows. Add to these features, a nose bold and prominent, a wide mouth with thin lips, a chin large and square, and you will have a faint idea of the peculiar expression of Dr. Reuben's face.

As the young woman came within the circle of the light, it might be seen, that her eyes unnaturally bright, shone from a face which was stamped with a corpse-like pallor.

"Ann Clarke," and as he spoke in a sweet and even voice, the Doctor's protruding eyes emitted a glance which penetrated the young woman to the soul — "Ann Clarke I have a word to say to thee. When a young woman, unmarried, has placed herself in a Doctor's power, *by destroying a life which is the fruit of her passions* — does thee hear?"

Ann with her eyes cast to the floor, stood trembling from head to foot. She was silent.

"Why in that case, Ann Clarke, the young woman aforesaid, should never think of mixing any *white dust* with the punch of the Doctor aforesaid. Does thee understand? Especially if that white dust should look and smell like arsenic. Do my words seem plain to thee?"

Before these words were completed Ann fell at his feet, her eyes closed, her limbs stiffened, as if in death.

Laughing heartily to himself, Doctor Reuben resumed his broad brim, and left the room and the house. In a few moments the sound of his horse's hoofs echoed on the midnight air.

When Ann recovered her senses, she found Arthur Bayne bending over her, his cheeks flushed, his eyes brilliant with an unnatural joy.

"Give me joy, my friend," he cried, "Give me joy. Alice survives, and her child will also live. But you are worn out: this late watching has been too much for you. Take a little sleep Ann — I myself will watch while you sleep. Dr. Reuben told me that I need have no fear for Alice —"

Assisted by the hand of Arthur Bayne, the young woman rose from the floor, and took her seat by the table, by the light of the waning lamp.

"God bless us! What ails you Ann?" and Arthur started back at the sight of her face. "You are terribly changed within an hour. I scarce can recognize you —"

Ann, whose face stamped with a livid pallor, was compressed in every line, as with the resolution of despair, raised her lack-lustre eyes to the face of the young Merchant, and said in a low voice —

"Sit by me for a few moments, Mr. Bayne, and I will tell you all."

Her tone filled Arthur with a feeling of terror which he could not analyze.

"All? What mean you?"

"Ah," she continued, "And when all is told, you may spurn me from your doors, or murder me if you like, but speak I must, and now."

Clad as he was in a dressing gown, the young Husband sank in a chair, his noble face manifesting a sudden interest in every lineament.

"When you were married, Arthur Bayne, some three years ago, your wife gave me, her poor relation, a home —"

"Do not speak of it Ann. You have been to Alice friend, nurse, and sister. Rather speak of the vast debt of kindness we — Alice, myself, our children — owe to you."

A smile crossed the young woman's face. Such a smile, as reminds you of sunshine playing over the face of a corpse.

"A vast debt, indeed!" she continued, with

an accent of singular bitterness—"Hear me first, and then you can estimate the amount of this debt at your leisure."

With a voice that never faltered, and an eye that never once changed its glassy lustre, Ann Clarke, "the poor relation," then uttered these words:

"This is no time for woman's modesty; this is not the hour for maidenly shame. You think me a pure and innocent girl. Know once for all that I am a lost and guilty woman. Nay! Do not start, and gather that look of incredulity upon your face. Hear me—I shall be brief—and then form your own judgment. It is not for myself that I care, but for *you* and *yours*—"

"Ann! You are surely in a dream—"

"A little while before your marriage, I became acquainted with a young man who bore the name of Lemuel Gardiner. It was before my mother died, when I lived in a narrow court, and attempted to gain bread and shelter by the hard slavery of the needle. This Gardiner was a young man—not without good looks, and yet not pre-eminent for manly beauty. But his voice was low and smooth; his eyes always shone with an expression of quiet sympathy. He became—it matters not how—a visiter to our home. He won my love. We were then too poor to think of marriage. He was the only friend I had in the world. Blame me if you will, taunt me with my shame, but the truth must be told. I became his, and *without marriage*."

An expression of wonder and compassion stole over Arthur's face.

"Poor as I was, I had yet rich relations, who would be horror-stricken at the story of my shame. Poor as I was, I yet feared the jibe and the scorn of the great world. While my shame was a secret in my own home, I did not care for the morrow. But at the same moment, when I became conscious that a new life was throbbing within my breast, I was told by my lover that he could never redeem my shame, with a marriage vow. He was a Priest. Lemuel Gardiner was a name assumed for the occasion. He was a Priest of my own Church—"

"A Priest! It is incredible! A Priest of the Catholic Church—"

"Spare that look and accent of horror. He

was indeed a Priest, at the time of which I speak, but since then, he has been degraded from the service of the Altar. He is now, if I mistake not, a Convert to the Protestant Church, full of hatred to 'the Pope,' and overflowing with gall at the mere mention of 'idoltrous Rome'—"

"I think I have heard of the man," muttered the listener.

"This lover told me that he could not marry me. But he would spare me the anguish of bringing into life a child, leprous from the hour of its birth with the brand of its Mother's shame. In a word, he brought to my humble dwelling in the narrow court, a very dear friend, whom he called Dr. Reuben Gatherwood—"

"Reuben Gatherwood!" ejaculated Arthur, in a tone of unfeigned amazement.

Her voice sank low, and deeper as she went on. Many times her livid face was overspread by flushes of burning scarlet. More than once she veiled her eyes, while her lips still continued that narration of dishonour and despair.

"And thus," she exclaimed, after the nameless tragedy of her life had been told: "Thus deserted by Lemuel Gardiner, the forsworn Priest, I became the bound Slave of Dr. Reuben Gatherwood. A word from Dr. Reuben could at any moment blast me with the name of *MURDERESS*! From the hour which Dr. Reuben entered my home, until this moment, I have been his slave."

"Reuben Gatherwood! I cannot—cannot believe it;" and the merchant looked with vague incredulity into the face of the agitated woman. "But Ann," said he, kindly taking her hand within his own, "The past is with the past. Do not think that I have for you any emotion that approaches to condemnation or contempt. What need to make this revelation of your life to me?"

"Because it concerns you, and none other," replied Ann, in an emphatic tone.

"I am in the dark; I cannot see the drift of your words—"

"You will know, alas! too soon—" Ann hid her face in her hands.

The young Merchant did not seem to hear her words. A smile that was born at the fountains of a generous heart, gave a new life to his handsome face.

"And as to Dr. Reuben Gatherwood, he will never breathe a whisper of this early misfortune," he exclaimed. "He is not the man to abuse the confidence of any living thing."

"Reflect for a moment," said Ann, in a tone of peculiar emphasis. "For two years Dr. Reuben Gatherwood has (in the absence of his aged father) been the confidential Physician of your home. For two years has Ann Clarke been an inmate of your house."

Arthur could not understand the expression which came over the young woman's face. Her cheeks became more and more death-like, while her eyes flashed with dazzling light. Her accent was clear and distinct; every word from her lips seemed invested with a peculiar and hidden meaning.

"I am in the dark yet, Ann," murmured Arthur.

"You have doubtless often heard the enemies of the Roman Church speak in terms of the utmost horror concerning the influence which the Priest exercises in every Catholic family. And yet what is the influence, what is the power of the Priest, compared to the confidential Physician? Once I heard it said, that a just Physician was the truest Minister of God on earth. Familiar with ailments of the body and mind, he can administer to the wants of both, while the Priest only pretends to care for the Soul. Can you imagine the power of evil which rests in the hands of the corrupt Physician?"

"You speak in enigmas," answered Arthur, smiling in spite of himself, at the earnestness and gravity of the young woman: "Upon my word, Ann, I cannot fathom your meaning."

"Enigmas! Alas, that an evil like that which I am about to describe, cannot be spoken of in any other way than by hints and whispers."

She paused, and her eyes assumed again that vague and dreamy lustre. Bending forward, Arthur earnestly perused each feature of her pallid face, as if to wrench from her looks the hidden meaning of her words.

"The woman is mad," he muttered to himself; "The story of her fault is only the fancy of a bewildered brain."

"Listen," she said quietly, and then commenced a narrative, which held Arthur Bayne enchained for the space of half an hour.

CHAPTER FOURTEENTH.

THE HISTORY TOLD BY THE DYING WOMAN.

PART III.

Mark the sudden changes of his face, hear the broken exclamations which escape between his set teeth, and then as the very apathy of horror gathers over his every lineament, guess if you can—if you dare—the nature of the narrative, that now falls word by word into his soul.

At last the narrative was told.

"I do not curse you," said Arthur in a changed voice, "Nor do I charge this crime upon your head."

The young woman regarded with terror this unnatural calmness of look and tone.

"Pity, for God's sake pity!" she cried falling on her knees.

But he turned away, and with an uneven step left the room. The agony of a lost soul was gnawing at his heart, but his face was calm as marble, and as colorless. No groan came from his lips, as he passed along the dark entry and ascended the stairs. He hesitated for a moment, when he stood upon the threshold of his wife's chamber, but gathering strength for the effort—an effort that in his present state of mind demanded superhuman strength—he pushed open the door and crossed the threshold.

A taper standing upon a side-table, flung a faint light upon the gathered curtains of a bed. Those curtains were like the driven snow, and from their folds appeared a small white hand, whose delicate outlines were distinctly drawn upon the silken coverlet.

You cannot see his face, as he approaches the bed and looks within. A wife and her new born babe are slumbering there, but the curtains hide them from our sight.

He for a moment conceals his face among their folds, and then lifts the white hand to his lips.

Without a word he passes from the room. The Mother is sleeping with her new-born child upon her breast—whither tend the footsteps of the Husband and the Father?

Ann, frightened by the terrible calmness of his manner, has passed from the lower room into the entry. In the dark she is waiting—

listening. She does not watch very long, before a step is heard descending the stairs. A figure wrapped in a cloak with many capes hurries by her, and the next instant she hears the front door open and shut, with a stealthy sound. The figure is gone. The young woman would fain hurry to the door, and arrest his steps, but she is palsied. She has lost for the moment the power of motion and speech.

In the dark she stands, clutching her throat, as though in the attempt to crush the agony, which swells in a torrent of fire, from her heart to her brain.!

Hark! The beat of hoofs upon the road, in front of the door—for a moment the sound is heard distinctly—and then it whirls away and mingles with the blast.

"My God! He is gone!" ejaculates the young woman—"Whither? For what purpose?"

The wind is howling around the quiet Oakleaf home. The sleet is beating against the upper window pane. In the room, where a dim light is glimmering, sleeps the Mother and her babe. The rosy boy, is slumbering too, within that soundless mansion. The fire on the hearth is burning low, but the old clock throbs on—the only sound within those dark grey walls.

Look yonder on the road which leads toward the Schuylkill, and toward the haze now glimmering over the distant city. A horseman with closely muffled form is spurring on, through mire and snow, with the cold blast beating full upon his uncovered brow. He does not once look back, though Oakleaf, and a Mother and her babe, are slumbering there. Toward the city, with mad haste he flies, spurring his horse, as though he would fill the generous animal with some portions of the spirit now boiling in his own veins.

Change the scene for a moment to Arch Street, where a line of lofty mansions, break indistinctly into the leaden sky. A horseman comes madly along the street; he flings his steed back on his haunches, before a door, which by the light of a neighboring lamp, glitters with a broad silver plate.

DR. REUBEN GATHERWOOD—is the name inscribed upon that plate.

The horseman dismounts. Muffled in his heavy cloak, he ascends the marble steps, and in an instant the bell is in his grasp. Hark! How that sound echoes through the lofty chambers of the mansion!

After a brief delay the door is opened, and a servant clad in the Quaker garb appears.

"I wish to see young Dr. Gatherwood on an errand of life and death."

Shading his eyes from the street lamp, the servant regards this muffled form for a few moments with a wondering look.

"These cannot see him, for truly he is not in the house."

"Where can I find him?" was the next question, in a quiet but impatient voice.

"Well—now—he has so many patients—truly—" stammered the servant.

"Quick! I tell you man it is on a mission of life and death," cried the muffled figure.

"It is very late—truly it must be near morning. I rather think thee can find young Dr. Reuben at—"

He hesitated, and surveyed the stranger with a cautious glance.

"Where?" and a vigorous hand was laid upon the servant's shoulder. "Lose no time, but tell me at once—"

"Thee is a very rude man; I must say. Thee can find Dr. Reuben at his Dissecting Room—"

"And that is—"

"In an old building, fourth story, in an alley that runs from Second to Third, below Chestnut."

The horseman on his steed again, urges him with word and spur, and through the sleet and mire, the sparks fly from the horse's hoofs.

It is an alley narrow and dark, and in the day-time the sun-beam may scarcely struggle down between these high and gloomy walls. It is, at this moment of the night, as silent and deserted as the grave itself. From yonder window in the fourth story, a ray flickers out, and dies in the sleety air. Let us ascend to that window, and look within its dingy panes.

It is a long and narrow room. Furniture there is none. The walls are high, the ceiling black with smoke, the floor spotted with blotches, and the solitary window, half covered with a ragged curtain. The atmosphere is dense and

sickening. In the centre, stands a large table of unpainted pine, and upon this table burns a lamp, which emits a small flame, obscured by a cloud of smoke.

By the table, or rather bending over it, behold a lean figure, with a black muslin apron bound across his narrow chest. The sleeves of his shirt, for he has thrown his coat aside, are spotted with blood red stains. In one hand he holds a small instrument of steel, glittering through the blood which drips from its slender blade. His homely face, is agitated by an unnatural enthusiasm; his eyes, protruding at all times, now seem about to start from their sockets. His lips, thin and wide, are tightly compressed, and his hard deep breathing, may be heard through the whole extent of the long narrow room. His forehead glitters with large beads of moisture. He is entirely absorbed in the task, which has called him to this lonely room.

Upon the table, beneath the gaze of his protruding eyes, lies stretched the body of a human being. Only yesterday that body was the casement of a woman's soul: now, by the ray of the smoky lamp, behold the casket from which the eternal spark has fled.

Alas! Alas! Not even the grave was a resting place for you, poor Daughter of the Poor! Many times, in want and misery you wished for Death, and prayed God for the resting place of a quiet grave. There, after hunger, cold, sin and despair, you would at last, be at peace. They buried you only yesterday in Potter's Field. They crushed your limbs, into the rude coffin, and laid you to rest, without a word or prayer, but with the music of a rattling spade and a falling clod. But even in the grave, rest is denied you. You died poor—science now demands your Corpse. It is necessary for Science and the world, that even the unblest mould of Potter's field, should be stripped from your unpainted coffin. The rough lid is tore aside, and your form grasped by the hand of wretches, who are forced to earn a dollar in this way, is huddled into a cart, and borne through the populous city to the inner Temple of Science—the Dissecting Room. It must be a comfort to you, Poor Woman, to think that all this is done in the cause of Science—Science that

did so much for you and yours, while life was in your veins.

And over this corpse, like the Ghoul of eastern legend over its loathsome meal, hung Dr. Reuben Gatherwood, with sharpened knife and gloating eye.

"Immortality of the soul—let me cut the body into a thousand pieces—shall I find any proof of it here?" Thus soliloquized Dr. Reuben, as he bent over the corpse; "Truly the great Frenchman, Broussais, was right! Let me dissect these nerves, and I will show *the cause* of all sensibility. A cut or two at the viscera will reveal *the cause* of all passion. As for the mind it is only a *secretion* of the brain. Truly the scalpel is a great Teacher!"

Reuben belonged to that class of Physicians who open the casket from which a diamond has been stolen, and demonstrate from the very structure of the casket, that it never contained a diamond at all. In other words, after the soul has left its casement, Reuben seeks for it, by rending into pieces, the body from which it has fled.

Reuben was an Atheist. With all his knowledge of Science, the veriest Child babbling amid its toys, could have taught him a Science as far above his own, as the canopy of heaven is above the kennel. The Child *can believe*. Reuben was *incapable of belief*.

"Broussais was right," said Reuben, passing his knife along the brow of the dead. "Matter is God, and God is matter—"

At this moment, the light was extinguished. How we cannot tell, but it went out, as though the wick had been snapt by a pistol shot.

"Truly," cried Reuben, as he found himself alone in the dark with the dead—"Truly this is singular—"

Then a weapon descended upon Reuben's skull, with all the force of an arm nerved by frenzy. It was the stock of a pistol, or perchance a knotted club, but it did not give Reuben much time for thought. In the thick dark it descended upon Reuben's head, his breast, his shoulders. He made an attempt to grapple with his unseen enemy. In the attempt he fell backward upon the table, and upon the breast of the corpse. He lay struggling there, while the club or pistol stock, continued to rain its blows upon him. Reuben moaned,

cursed, pleaded, but still the work went on. Beaten to a jelly, his face streaming blood, his limbs mangled, Reuben endeavoured to rise from the corpse and battle with his unseen enemy.

"Devil!" he gasped, "Does thee mean to murder me?"

An iron instrument struck him on the skull, with terrible, yes, fatal force.

Reuben struggled no more.

On the table, side by side with the dead woman, he lay, while a hand was inserted beneath his vest, next to his heart.

Does the heart still beat?

The hand is withdrawn, and a step is heard followed by the jar of a door.

Late in the afternoon of the next day, a brother Physician entered the Dissecting Room, and found the mangled body of Dr. Reuben stretched beside the woman's corpse. It was a ghastly and repulsive spectacle.

On the morning of the next day, a riderless horse stood covered with foam before the door of the Oakleaf mansion.

And on a rock, beside the Schuylkill, a blue cloak and cap were found by a fisherman who was wandering near the shore. "They were recognized, by a letter in the cap, as the property of Arthur Bayne.

For many days Philadelphia rung with the details of two sad and painful events.

"Dr. Reuben Gatherwood has been assailed by assassins while in his study, and is now lingering at the point of death."

"Arthur Bayne, one of our first Merchants, was drowned in the Schuylkill by the fright of an unmanageable horse."

These topics supplied matter for the discussion of the gossips of the street and the press, for at least three days.

Three days have passed. We stand once more in the chamber of Alice Bayne. The curtains are drawn, the place is very still, a faint taper is burning by the bed.

From the next room you hear the smothered voice of mourning. No relatives are gathered there, neither father nor mother, sister nor friends—none watching for the last moment

of the dying Mother, save a solitary woman, whose tears fell unseen by any human eye.

But in this chamber all is still. Once the bridal chamber, then the chamber of motherhood, it is now the chamber of death. She has been dying for three days. Ever since the word of her Husband's death reached her ears, she has been sinking slowly into the shadow of Eternity.

Soon the mystery of her life will be revealed.

CHAPTER FIFTEENTH.

THE HISTORY TOLD BY THE DYING WOMAN.

PART IV.

"Ann," said a low voice within the curtains of the bed, "Has *he* come?"

But there was no answer to the question. For no living being was within sound of the dying mother's voice.

"Bring Harry to me, Ann. Bring him at once. I must see him once more before I leave you all."

Again the voice of Alice was unanswered.

But soon, from the door leading into the next room, there comes with stealthy tread, a young woman whose slender form, is enveloped in a black dress. Her face, pale at all times, is now furrowed with the traces of burning tears. In her arms she carries the Boy, with clear blue eyes, and sunny golden hair.

And the little fellow, unconscious of evil or death, struggles in her arms, and laughs gaily as he looks up into her pale, haggard face.

"I will go to pa's room," he exclaims in infantile tones, as he endeavours to release himself from her embrace. "He is home. I know he is. There now—don't you tell a story, you naughty Ann."

"Hush! Child! Your mother—your poor, mother is very, very sick"—whispers Ann as she surveys his laughing face with a sigh.

"Ann, are you there?" exclaims a low voice.

Ann slowly draws the curtains, and the light streams dimly in upon the dying mother and her babe. The face of the mother, half buried in the silken pillow, is colorless, save a tint of red on her cheek. Her eyes, large and bright, and impassioned with a mother's love, are turned toward the young woman, who stands beside her bed. One hand, white as marble

is laid upon the coverlet; the other rests upon her babe, whose tiny face, smiles in the light, from the opposite side of the bed.

"Ma! Ma! Let me see my little siss," cries the Boy, clapping his hands, and making an effort to spring from the arms of Ann, upon the bed.

A tear stole down the cheek of the young Mother.

"Hold him near to me Ann. There," she pressed a kiss upon the lips of her boy — "Go to bed, now, that's a good Harry. In the morning you shall see me — shall he not, Ann?"

With a faint smile she uttered these words, as her white hand wondered through the golden locks of her boy.

Ann could not restrain a burst of tears. For when morning comes, this young mother will be dead. The first sunbeam that steals through the window pane, will only light her white lips and glassy eyes.

"When I am dead — you remember, Ann — your promise?"

"I will — I will," said the young woman amid her sobs, "I will take care of Harry and be a mother to your new-born babe."

"What is 'dead?'" asked the boy, turning his large eyes from face to face.

"You talked with old Doctor Gatherwood, when he was here to-day?" whispered Alice — "He told you that I could not last till morning!"

The young woman could not answer. This preternatural calmness of the dying mother, affected her with an agony too deep for words.

"Don't cry, cousin," whispered Alice — "I shall soon be with Arthur." And she lifted her eyes, with an expression of rapture, which you never see, save on a face, which has been touched by the holy hand of Death.

Ann could no longer gaze upon the scene. She hurried from the room, bearing the boy in her arms. As she crossed the threshold, he looked over her shoulder, and clapped his hands, and said with a tone that we in vain endeavour to depict —

"Morrow, Ma! Morrow I will see you!"

The next moment the young mother was alone once more, with her sleeping babe.

She spoke her thoughts in words, as she gazed vacantly upon the dim light.

"Arthur and I were orphans, when we married. His relations live far, far away, and mine cannot reach the city until I am dead. Then it storms so, that our friends in the city, cannot come in time to bid me farewell. Ann is a good friend. She will be a mother to my children. *That* takes the bitterest sting away. Arthur! Arthur I will not be long —"

Once more Ann entered the room, and on tip-toe approached the bedaide. In a low voice, she told the dying one, that a number of friends — the friends of the husband and of herself — had just arrived, and were impatient to see her for the last time.

"Let them come up. Yet stay — has *he* arrived?"

"He! Of whom do you speak!"

"When old Dr. Gatherwood was here this afternoon, I besought him to send me a Minister. You know, that neither Arthur nor myself were members of any church. Had I my life to live over again, I would more faithfully attend to the service of God. Has *he* come — speak — I would not die, without a prayer?"

These words, spoken with great effort, caused a singular change in the listener's countenance. She stood with her back to the light, and therefore the dying one could not see the shadow which came suddenly over her brow.

"A Minister!" she exclaimed — "Did you name the Minister of a particular Church?"

"No — I did not. Has no one arrived?"

"There is a Minister down stairs, but —"

"Why do you hesitate?" and Alice raised her eyes with an imploring look — "Tell him to come — do not refuse me, cousin."

As she spoke a third voice, interrupted the conversation:

"There is no time to be lost —" the voice was deep and sepulchral — "Sister I would be alone, for a little while, with this departing sinner."

As though every accent of that voice, was the poisoned sting of a loathsome reptile, Ann turned pale, shuddered, and with a quick movement confronted the speaker.

"Lemuel Gardiner!" she ejaculated, raising her hands.

Near the light, with hands clasped on his breast, he stood, his huge white cravat, contrasted with his dark attire, throwing his

marked features, into strong relief. His eyes half closed and sunken in their sockets, his wide mouth with deep red lips, his prominent nose, and massive lower jaw, gave altogether a decided expression to his face.

"It is I, sister," he answered meekly.

"You, and here!" the young woman confronted him with a flashing eye.

"It is, I," his voice sank into a whisper, and his eyes were dropped meekly to the floor: "Lemuel Gardiner, once a Roman priest, in the gall and bitterness of anti-Christ, but now a Minister of a truly Evangelical Church. Do you upbraid me, sister, with the sins of my early life? Do you refuse me the privilege of a moment's conversation with the departing soul?"

He spoke very low, but his sunken eyes, suddenly flamed up, with a light that conveyed a deeper meaning, than all his measured words.

Ann trembled from head to foot.

"Pray! Converse! But I will—I must remain in this room—"

"Must you?" Lemuel slowly raised his finger while a smile agitated his warm red lips. "Remember! Think again. *Indeed*, will you?"

Ann without another word left the room.

Lemuel surveyed the chamber of death, with a calm and complacent look, and then approached the bed, on which the dying woman rested, her decaying life soothed by a half repose, between sleep and wakefulness.

"Sister, you are departing," he said, as he bent over the couch: "Shall I pray with you?"

She unclosed her eyes with a vague yet lustrous stare.

"I am the Minister," Lemuel whispered.

"Thanks," she murmured, lifting her hand from the silken coverlet: "Pray for me, pray that I may soon join Arthur up yonder, pray for the children that I am about to leave alone in this drear world."

Lemuel knelt by the bed. He prayed.

Was it a prayer full of Love, upon whose every accent, the dying soul might take wing, and ascend in peace to God?

No. It was a prayer of wrath. It spoke of a life spent in sin, of an offended God, of an eternity of torture.

Up in the bed started the dying Alice, her eyes flashing with terror, her breast swelling fearfully, beneath the silken coverlet.

"Hold! Hold!" she cried, spreading forth that hand, whose nails were already blue with the chill of death.

But Lemuel prayed on. Low, but deep and sonorous his voice swelled through the silence of the death room. Tears streamed down his cheeks: he clasped his hands: he seemed to feel horror-stricken at the very doom, which he was compelled by his duty to denounce upon the dying sinner.

Sinner? Remember, Alice was by the revelation of Ann Clarke, an innocent woman. Remember, by that revelation, Alice was unconscious of the treachery of young Reuben Gatherwood.

And yet she was a sinner. A sinner lost to hope and mercy, with nothing in prospect beyond the grave, but an eternity of torture. Lemuel said so in his terrible prayer; Lemuel with sepulchral voice, and streaming eyes, and hands knit together, uttered words like these, to the ear of the dying Alice.

At last, starting up in the bed, her eyes lighted with the fires of a preternatural horror, Alice cried in a voice that was interrupted by gasps—

"O, Sir, what shall I do to escape all this? Tell me—I must not be parted from Arthur, in another world. Speak! Speak!"

She sank back upon the pillow, panting, trembling, her pale cheek flushed with unnatural color.

At once Lemuel rose. In the pocket of his dark coat, descended his large hand. He drew forth a portable ink-stand, which contained a newly-mended pen, and a small phial of ink.

"Sister, do you think you could sign your name?"

She turned her eyes to his face, with a look of vague wonder.

"Sign your name to a piece of paper, which will give a small portion of your wealth, to the sick and suffering, who are without shelter and without bread?"

He spread forth the parchment upon the coverlet. He placed the pen in that death-chilled hand. It was a curious parchment, covered with writing—writing in all kinds of text and script—and adorned with one or

more seals attached to ribbons of a bright azure.

"Sign, Sister, and all shall go well with you up yonder."

Placing one hand, behind her neck—among those curls of sunny gold which escaped from her cap—he raised her gently from the pillow, and pointed to the parchment, as he whispered in her ear:

"It is for the poor. It is for the suffering. You cannot take your wealth with you. Sign!"

A faint smile played around the lips of Alice. She gazed upon the parchment, with a large, a very bright, but altogether vacant eye. The light tinted with faint warm colour, her golden hair: she looked *like death* but still very fair and beautiful.

The pen moved in her hand. Lemuel still lifting her from the pillow, kindly guided the pen, as it moved along the parchment. ALICE BAYNE—that name was written in a cramped, but very bold and legible hand.

"ALICE BAYNE!" murmured the young Mother, gazing vacantly at her own—and her last signature.

Gently, Lemuel suffered her to fall back upon the pillow. Quietly and suddenly he signed his own name opposite the name of Alice.

"Brother Jacob, you can come in!" he said aloud.

The door opened, and a short, portly man, dressed in dark attire, with small features in a very large and fleshy face, stepped over the threshold and approached the bed.

"You acknowledge this to be your hand and seal, act and deed?" said Lemuel, as he turned to Alice.

Alice smiled. It was a vague and wandering smile, that imparted a sad loveliness to her face.

"Yes," she exclaimed—"my hand, my own hand. Then you know I shall see Arthur!"

"You hear her, Brother Jacob," said Lemuel to his friend. "Sign your name, Brother Jacob. Here, Brother Jacob! do you observe what a pleasant frame of mind she is in just now?"

Brother Jacob (otherwise Jacob Something, Esq., Attorney at Law, and Communicant of

Rev. Lemuel Gardiner's Church,) bent over the bed, and signed his name, beneath the name of the Preacher, in a round and clerly hand.

At this crisis the door opened, and Ann Clarke, once more entered the room. She started as if stricken by a pistol shot, when she beheld the details of this scene—the form of Lemuel and Jacob in the foreground, with their gaze fixed upon the parchment, which lay upon the coverlet; while in the dim background, appeared the sad, happy face, of the death-stricken Mother.

"What do you here, with pen and parchment?" she cried suddenly, as with a single step she reached the Preacher's side: "Lemuel, there is some mystery here—"

"Only a bequest to my Church, Sister," answered Lemuel, with a kindly smile.

"That is all: a bequest to our Church," echoed the short and portly lawyer, as he folded the parchment and handed it to the Minister.

Ann surveyed each face with a deep and anxious look:

"Lemuel, beware! There is a limit to endurance!" she whispered.

"Ann, be careful! There is a limit to silence," he answered.

And his look, flashing from beneath his compressed brow, gave a singular significance to his words.

Ann sank back, as though some inexplicable witchcraft had at once chilled her blood, and deprived her of the power of utterance. The light swam before her eyes. She extended her hand, and grasped the curtains of the bed, and it was a moment before her entire consciousness returned.

She looked round, in search of the Preacher and his friend. They had disappeared.

But over the threshold, one by one, came the friends of the dying woman. Grave matrons and aged men, young wives and girls in the blush of virgin loveliness, all swarmed into the room, anxious to take a last look at Alice Bayne.

Alice greeted them all with an extended hand, and a cheerful smile. For every one she had some kindly word. And yet, as she spoke to them, she said at the end of every farewell—"I shall soon see Arthur." Her eyes were bright, O, all too bright for this dull

world of clay. Her voice was touched with angelic rapture. "Soon I shall see Arthur?" she never ceased to speak the words, amid those whispered farewells.

The friends had gone: it was midnight: Alice was sleeping with her babe, beneath the pressure of her extended hand.

Ann, with her head buried in the coverlet, was praying and weeping by the bed of death.

Midnight passed, and morning drew nigh. She was sinking slowly—slowly, gently into death—talking all the while of Arthur, of her children, of heaven.

"Take care of Harry!" she said, as morning was dawning through the window curtains. "And, do you hear, cousin? I want my baby called after you? Ann—Annie—you remember?"

Ann did not raise her face, but reached forth her hand and clasped the hand of the departing Mother. That hand was cold as ice.

"O, can you believe it?" said Alice, after a pause, "that the words which *he* spoke to me last night are true—"

Ann raised her face, and saw the countenance of the dying woman, tinted by the first rays of the dawn.

"What words?" she whispered, bending over the bed.

"About a lost Soul, and a God who was angry, and torture after death," said Alice, in a very low voice. "You can't tell how it frightened me—"

A shudder pervaded the frame of the young woman.

"Ah! Coward! Blasphemer!" she muttered, "Hast thou been tampering with the last hour of the dying one?"

"Do you think the good Lord will shut me out of Heaven? I am only a poor weak woman, that have loved my children better than life. Do you think *he* will be very angry with me? Speak, Ann, speak—I am going—will it be dark, dark with me, up yonder?"

It is a fearful thing to witness the departure of a troubled soul. It is a beautiful sight—the holiest sight in all the world—to witness the going forth of a Soul, that goes up to God, as to a kind father. Last night, before her interview with Lemuel, Alice saw in the Deity, only a parent who was calling her home. Now—on the verge of eternity—she shrank

back, troubled and afraid. The grave which had been all light, was now all darkness.

You may imagine the emotions which filled the bosom of Ann Clarke, as she became conscious of this truth.

She took the hands of Alice within her own. She gazed long and fixedly into her glassy eyes.

"Alice!" she whispered, "Alice! Look up yonder! It is the Lord who now awaits you and calls you to your home!"

Was there power in the words, or in the faith of the speaker? It lies beyond us to answer; but the face of the dying woman brightened with a calm rapture, and she raised her eyes heavenward, with a look that may have been only a reflection from the light of a Better World.

"I see! I see!" she cried, in a voice of unutterable gladness, and gently pressed her hands together.

The next instant she was dead. Her gaze fixed and glassy. She breathed no more. The young woman closed her eyes, and smoothed her golden hair along her marble cheek, all the while repeating in a low voice these words:

"Depart, Christian soul! out of this world, in the Name of God the Father Almighty who created thee: in the Name of Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, who suffered for thee; in the Name of the Holy Ghost, who sanctified thee; in the name of the Angels, Archangels, Thrones, and Dominations, Cherubim, and Seraphim; in the Name of the Patriarchs and Prophets, of the Holy Apostles and Evangelists, of the Holy Martyrs and Confessors, of the Holy Monks and Hermits, of the Holy Virgins and of all the Saints of God; let thy place be this day in Peace, and thy abode in Holy Sion: Through Christ our Lord. Amen."

The first sunbeam came. It shone upon the dead mother and upon her babe, which slumbered in the arms of the young woman, who sat upon the bed.

A glad shout burst upon the air of the death room. The door opened with a crash, and a little boy, with cheeks flushed with color, and golden hair floating on his broad shoulders, came plunging into the room.

"Ma, it's morning!" he cried as he sprang toward the bed.

The Mother is buried: the yellow earth of her grave, is seen distinctly amid the churchyard, white with snow.

Alone in the mansion of Oakleaf, sits the young woman with the new-born babe upon her knee, and the boy by her side. There is warm light upon the tiny face of the babe, warm light upon the golden curls of Harry, warm and rosy light upon the haggard visage of the young woman, their protectress.

What shall be the Fortune of these children? Wait, and we will see. After the Mother has been buried many days, her Uncle—her nearest and most beloved relative—arrives from the West, and hastens to Oakleaf. The death of Arthur is proved: and he sees the grave of his niece.

This niece Alice Bayne, was worth, in her own right, something like Ten Thousand Dollars. Her husband possessed near Fifteen Thousand Dollars. This property was in stock, in lands, in houses and in gold.

Did Alice make a will? This question of course is answered. No. Then, reasons the Uncle, the property descends to the children, to Harry the boy, and Annie the new-born babe. Of course the Uncle is correct. He is about to take out letters of Administration, as Executor of the deceased, When—

Ah! That is the very point of the matter! When there came to Oakleaf the Rev. Lemuel Gardiner (or the Minister whose real designation we conceal under this fictitious name) and with the reverend Convert from Rome, came Jacob Something Esq., Attorney at Law.

'The dear blessed young lady before her death, deeply affected with the perilous condition of the Heathen World, left all her own property to the Universal South Sea Island Missionary Association.'

This was one half of the Rev. Lemuel's story. It may be as well to state that Lemuel was the President, actual President if not nominal, of the "U. S. S. I. M. A."

'Then she by her will appointed the Rev. Lemuel Gardiner and Jacob Something, Esq., Executors and Administrators of the estate. She also appointed these gentlemen guardians of her children, and trustees of her estate, until these children become respectively nineteen and twenty-one years of age.'

This was the other half of the Rev. Lemuel's story.

These events, you will bear in mind, occurred in the course of the year 1826.

You may fancy the surprise of the Uncle when he heard the story. As for Ann Clarke, she said nothing: the eye of Lemuel was upon her, but she remembered well the prayers which Lemuel uttered by the couch of the dying Alice.

The Uncle thought deeply? Should he go to law? Go to law with the U. S. S. I. M. A., and fling himself into the face of the Church over which Lemuel was Pastor? The will was before him, properly written, signed by the dead woman, and legally witnessed. What *could* the Uncle do.

He went out West again, and never saw Harry or Annie from the hour when he left Oakleaf until the day of his death.

As for the Rev. Lemuel behold him installed as the Master at the Oakleaf Mansion. He is the Guardian of the Children; the Trustee of the Estate. For Jacob Something, Esq., is only a blank. And Ann Clark, protectress of the children, is notified that her presence at Oakleaf is no longer needed.

A month after the death of Alice, Ann is coolly dismissed from Oakleaf by the Rev. Lemuel Gardiner.

Two months afterwards, both children, Harry and Annie, are stolen from Oakleaf by some person or persons unknown.

The Rev. Lemuel fills the papers with advertisements; he seeks for the children in every quarter; and after the lapse of a few more months, disappears suddenly himself. The papers, speak at length of his mysterious disappearance, and universal sympathy prevails, which is materially modified, when it is discovered, that before leaving, the Rev. Lemuel had sold lands and houses without number, and realized some Twenty Thousand Dollars in gold and silver.

Meanwhile what has become of the children?

And did Dr. Reuben Gatherwood die of the wounds inflicted by his unknown assailant? No. He suffered much, but he lived. His practice grew, his fees multiplied, his fame was echoed through all the Medical Schools. But not more than a year after the death of

Alice, he also suddenly disappeared; and like the Rev. Lemuel Gardiner, was never again seen nor heard of in Philadelphia.

But the children, and Ann Clarke—what has become of them? Let us listen to the poor wretch who is dying in the third story of Bonus Court. Still clutching the wrist of the Priest, she whispers the last words of her Confession—that Confession on which we have based the Narrative of the preceding chapters.

CHAPTER SIXTEENTH.

THE DEATH-ROOM IN BONUS COURT.

We are once more in Bonus Court. Again we behold the face of the Priest, who is held to the couch of death, by the clutch of the dying woman's hand.

"I could not live apart from the children. I knew that Lemuel Gardiner had procured that will by fraud. I stole the children from Oakleaf, and changed their names. For years I worked and slaved to give them a support, and—" she paused and gasped for breath—"Behold the end of all!"

Her eyes wandered about the desolate room, and the light revealed each repulsive feature of her pestilence-smitten face.

The Priest, stricken as he was by horror, mustered sufficient calmness to ask a question:

"Have you ever since 1826 heard of Lemuel Gardiner?"

"Once, after his flight, I heard that he still lived—that he was preaching against the Pope in a distant part of the country."

Even touched as it was by death, her face assumed an expression of scornful laughter.

"And Reuben Gatherwood—this treacherous Physician—have you ever heard of him since 1826?"

"Some years ago, it was stated that he was engaged in the African Slave Trade. The name under which he passed was Captain something, Brad—Bradbury, or some such name."

The Priest's brow became clouded.

"And the children?"

"One a white slave; and the other an outcast. Yes, yes—" her voice rose in a shriek of horrible laughter—"One is hastening rapidly to the public streets—you hear me? Her future is that of the woman who

traffics her favors for bread. The other is hastening as rapidly to the Penitentiary. And these are the children of Arthur and Alice Bayne! Don't you think this Reuben will have a rich account to settle up yonder?" She laughed again: "And Lemuel—O, the Apostate and three-fold Traitor! Would I could see him now, to tell him what his crimes will bring him to at last!"

The Priest trembled at the horrible expression of her countenance. He endeavored to withdraw his hand, but she only clutched his wrist with a firmer grasp.

"Come," he said, "I will absolve you for all these sins. I must leave you now."

He began to repeat a prayer from the ritual of the Roman Church. It was the same prayer which many years before, Ann Clarke had uttered by the bed of the dying Alice:

"Depart, Christian soul! out of this world, in the Name of God the Father Almighty who created thee: in the Name of Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, who suffered for thee: in the Name of—"

"Death is near, and there is no longer a mist before my soul," cried the dying woman, as her eyes flamed with an unnatural light—"Do not pray for me Priest—not yet! not yet! Not until I have told you the fate of Reuben Gatherwood and Lemuel Gardiner!"

"Hold!" faltered the Priest, "you must not employ your last hour in curses."

The tone of the dying woman became strangely calm and measured.

"I do not curse," she whispered, "I only predict. This Reuben and this Lemuel are linked together in crime. Reuben a Physician false to God and man, and steeped to the lips in pollution. Lemuel an apostate Priest, a faithless lover, a wretch in holy robes who guided the hand of Alice, when she signed away the heritage of her children. Do you behold those comrades in iniquity? Have you listened to the history of their crimes? Now listen, while I describe the manner of their death."

"No! No!" shrieked the Priest, struggling with the hand which clutched his wrist—"I will not hear you. Remember! you are about to leave this world, with all its trials and its hatreds. Do not curse."

Up in the wretched bed, started the miserable

woman. She flung her black hair, streaked with silver, aside from her hideous face! Then, clutching the Priest with one hand, she stretched forth the other—blotched by disease—as though pointing toward a scene, which rose before her glazing eyes:

"They shall die together," she whispered, *"Reuben and Lemuel locked in the embrace of despair, and taunting each other with their mutual crimes. Do you not see them? Look! Look! There——"*

Her voice was gone. With that prophecy, uttered by lips livid and loathsome with the pestilence, her soul passed away. The Priest was grasped by a dead hand, whose fingers encircled his wrist with a clutch of iron.

His harsh features, thrown into relief by his skull-cap, were distorted by a look of fright and terror.

"Take your hand from my wrist," he cried, "I will not hear your curses! Away! away! Don't force me to battle with a dying woman."

Bewildered by his fright, he started to his feet, but the hand still clutched his wrist.

"Curses upon my folly! Why did I enter this den? Why, lured by the hope of hearing something that might bring me gold, did I hurry to the death bed of Ann Clarke?" with his freed hand he wiped the cold moisture from his forehead—"Ann, you should not be revengeful," his voice fell into an accent of whining entreaty—"We are all frail—not one of us is free from sin. I am not the cause of the degradation of these children. Indeed I am not."

His voice grew faint and fainter. He sank on his knees. His eyes closed, and his head fell forward, upon the ragged coverlet. His black skull-cap and dark attire, were distinctly disclosed by the light fading in its socket, while gaunt and loathsome, the body of the dead woman, half uncovered, was stretched upon that bed of despair.

No one was there to close her lifeless lids. Her jaw had fallen, and her cold eyes seemed to glare with a defiant look, upon the Priest, whose face was buried in the coverlet near her side.

The light was fading low and lower, the place was still with the stillness of death, and the dead woman's hand still clutched the wrist of the Priest.

Once more we return to the room on the first floor.

CHAPTER SEVENTEENTH.

RALPH AND STEWEL ONCE MORE.

"That er' tin box," said Stewel, puffing his cigar.

Ralph once more clad in his outcast rage, confronted him with folded arms, and teeth set together.

"What does thee mean!" asked a mild sweet voice, as Martha Lott advanced from the shadows. "Thou hadst better put thy pistol and thy club into thy pocket again."

Poor Hannah Marvin said nothing, but her eyes expanded with a look of vague wonder.

"What do I mean?" said Stewel, as with mace and pistol, he seemed to embody all the plenitude of the Law, in his own corpulent person: "Why it's enough to break a-body's heart, so it is. Here's this young gallus been robbin' a most respectable individual of a tin box filled with valleyable papers. A parfic burglar-Ma'am!"

"Ralph what has thee to say to this?" said Martha Lott laying her hand gently upon his shoulder.

Ralph was silent. With knit brows and compressed lips, he was endeavouring to solve a singular problem, or rather a series of problems. Had Stewel really taken him for a rich man's son, whose name was *Charles Augustus Millikin*? Or, had Stewel, knowing his residence in Bonus Court, deliberately planned the robbery, and aided him in his escape from Brother Caleb's House? These queries were passing through the mind of Ralph: he was bewildered by a torrent of suspicions and surmises which buzzed like a nest of bees, in his brain.

"What do you mean? S-a-y!" he exclaimed, determined to put a bold face upon the matter: "I know nothin' o' yer tin box. Yer mistaken in the person—you are."

Stewel, pistol in one hand and mace in the other, advanced a step, and whispered a few words, audible only to the outcast boy.

"You see young man, I know'd you had genius, and so I put the management o' this little affair into your hands. I seed you often with the Fairy boys, and I ses, ses I, here's the young man, as can make his fortin by

nelpin' the Constitooshun and Laws. You take? I'm the Constitooshun and Laws; I am. Well, my chick, when I heer'd these covies were plannin' the robbery of Goodleigh's house, I pitched upon you as the very chap to settle their hash. I kidnapped you in front of the Church, made believe that I thought you was Charles Augustus Milliken, and put you, in the dark, into Goodleigh's house. Don't you take yit? Why bless your soul, I know'd you'd git the tin box all the while—you're so enterprizin'! And I know'd you'd make a straight track for Bonus Court—*though I took keer not to tell you so.* And now my dear, I've killed two birds with one stone. I've got the robbers safe in the lock-up, and through you, I've got the tin box. D'ye see? Jist pitch it over, and say no more about it."

Ralph heard this candid explanation with a singular complication of emotions. It was clear that Stewel himself had planned the robbery. No less clear, that Stewel himself, had entangled each one of the burglars, in a plot to rob Goodleigh's house. And clearest of all, that he, Ralph Jones, familiarly termed "Jonesey the B'iler," had been made the scape-goat of Stewel's "speculation," and the dupe of Stewel's pleasant game of "Constitooshun and Laws."

Will Ralph give up the tin box, and thus put the cap-stone to Stewel's magnificent scheme? Let us listen.

"Go way from me," growls Ralph squaring his elbows: "You're gass-y man! What do yer mean, by jawin' about a tin box? Get out!"

Stewel cocked the pistol. Stewel brandished the mace. "Come along," he said mildly, as he puffed his cigar—"We'll quit these premises together. *Moyamensin's* the word."

With one movement the Quaker woman and the Millerite's daughter, advanced and interrupted the scene, with their respective exclamations:

"Take care! you will shoot him!" cried Hannah.

"Friend, thou art behaving exceedingly bad," said Martha Lott. "Fie! Shame on thee! to brandish these weapons at the breast of a defenceless child!"

"Let him come on," growled Ralph: "If

he shoots he'll be hung. An' there 'aint been a Polees Offisser hung for these fifty years. Won't it be a sight? Crickey! How he'll kick!"

And Ralph, as if inspired by the picture drawn by his vivid fancy, burst into a hearty fit of laughter. At the same time, eyeing Stewel from head to foot, he added in a more quiet tone—

"It 'll take a thunderin' rope, though! Why you must weigh six hundred. Was you ever 'sibited in a cattle show?"

Stewel was but human. Even the placid current of his official temper was ruffled by the taunts of the ruffian boy. He dashed the cigar from his mouth.

"Now will you come, or won't you come?" he brandished his mace before the eyes of Ralph.

"Thee had better go with him," said the Quaker Woman. "Doubtless he is mistaken. To-morrow all things can be made right."

The mild voice, the calm face of the Quaker woman, seemed to subdue the rugged spirit of the young ruffian. His face changed; he seemed to hesitate whether to make an attack upon Stewel, or to submit quietly to his guidance.

"Go, Ralph," whispered Hannah: "in the morning father will get you bail—"

"What if I give up the tin box?" said Ralph suddenly—"That is, admittin' for argument sake, that I've got the tin box?"

Stewel's face brightened.

"Why then my lad, I'll give you an even ten dollars, and say no more about it."

"An' if I won't give it up?"

"Then you snooze in Moyamensin' to-night and come up afore Judge Choktaw at the next Court—"

"Chocktaw?" echoed Martha Lott—"Whom does thee call Chocktaw?"

Stewel cast upon the questioner a look of bland condescension and replied:

"Chocktaw is an ornament to any Christ'en community. He does things up brown, I tell you. If you come before him, he just takes a squint at your dress, and at a squint he knows your character, and measures your punishment. He's down on rags, I tell ye. Rags always get a fell dose in the Pennyntensherry, Rags does when Choktaw's on the bench. But

broadcloth—Lord! How he loves it, and smoothes over its weakness, and remembers what a good family it comes from! Chok-taw's one of 'em."

"I gin in," interrupted Ralph: "Come up stairs. The tin box is yours."

He moved toward the stairway, but Stewel arrested his step with a levelled pistol.

"None of your attempts to escape," he exclaimed: "The first move o' that kind you make, I fire. You know? Go ahead—I'm at your heels."

Ralph accordingly ascended the stairs, followed close by Stewel, with mace and pistol in his hand.

"Well!" cried Martha Lott, as they disappeared—"This surprises me! Ralph has not been up stairs, and therefore I conclude that the tin box is not there."

"And the poor Mother is alone there, making confession to the Priest," added Hannah. "She will not last until to-morrow. Where does Fanny stay?"

And with evident impatience the twain awaited the re-appearance of Ralph and Stewel.

CHAPTER EIGHTEENTH.

"THE CONVERTED MONK."

As Ralph ascended the stairs, followed by Stewel, a crowd of opposing thoughts struggled through his busy brain.

"There's a trap door in the ceilin' and I might get through that ar' door into the loft and from the loft out upon the roof, and then good mornin' to ye Mister Stewel Pydgon!"

So Ralph determined to escape from Stewel by the trap-door, in the ceiling of the third story. He passed through the room on the second floor. It was wrapped in darkness.

"Where are you feller?" cried Stewel and Ralph heard the click of his pistol: "The fust sign o' foul play, and I shoot—"

"'Nother story higher," answered Ralph: "Come on! Here's the stairs! You shall nave yer tin box, or my name's not Jonesey."

They were ascending the stairway which led upward into the death room. Ralph's heart beat wildly under its ragged jacket, as he saw the light shining through the chinks of the door. He laid his hand upon the latch.

"Wonder how mother is?" he said, and opened the door.

Stewel followed him into the room, closed the door, and calmly surveyed the various details of the scene.

The Corpse resting upon the ragged bed, with a red gleam of light playing upon its disfigured features. The dark figure kneeling beside the bed, with one hand grasped by the hand of the dead. The light flickering in its socket, now shooting up in a vivid flash, and suddenly dying away, until the blank walls and the miserable bed, were wrapped in vague twilight.

Stewel beheld the scene, and uttered, in his surprise a blasphemous oath. His hands sank by his side; both mace and pistol were pointed to the floor.

As for Ralph he did not seem to heed the kneeling figure, nor remark the tattered coverlet, which gave such a look of utter misery to that scene of death.

The first sight, the only sight that enchained his gaze, was the face of the dead woman, the cold eyes fixed upon the ceiling and the black hair, streaked with silver, floating over her clammy forehead.

Ralph passed his hands through his hair. He picked the buttons of his ragged coat. And standing by the bed with large, lack-lustre eyes, he continued to thread his matted hair, and pull the buttons of his coat, while Stewel remained like one spell-bound at his side.

"I guess the old woman's dead. Don't you think she's dead?" he whispered, turning to Stewel, with a strange grimace on his face. "Kicked the bucket—eh?"

And then he laughed. Such a laugh! Low, and growling through his set teeth, it even made Stewel start aside, as though something unpleasant had stricken him in the face.

"What a cuss!" muttered Stewel—"aint got no nateral feelin's."

Ralph, who in good sooth, felt in every nerve that Death was in the room, but who did not know how to control or to express his feelings, seated himself quietly upon the bed, and laid his hand upon the head of the corpse.

"So you're gone, old woman," he muttered, with an idiotic grin upon his face: "Left us for good—hey? No more hard work, and slavin' and starvin' where you're gone to?"

Thus saying Ralph pulled his matted hair over his eyes, and Stewel by the uncertain

light, saw a large tear glitter down the cheek of the ruffian boy.

Stewel began to feel exceedingly uncomfortable. He felt that the dignity of the Magistracy was in danger.

"Come, hand us over the tin box, and we'll say no more about it," he said, with some effort, for there was a thick and choking sensation in his throat.

"Go round 'tother side o' th' bed," answered Ralph — "Feel under the pillow."

Stewel without a word, passed the figure of the kneeling Priest, and in a second stood between the bed and the wall.

"What's the matter with that Preacher?" he exclaimed, pointing to the unconscious man — "Where did you say? Under the pillow?"

"Y-a-a-s," muttered Ralph.

Stewel laid both mace and pistol upon the bed, while his eyes began to tremble with an expression of serene complacency. Stewel muttered, "the tin box is here — is it?" and placed one hand beneath the pillow, bending very low in the action.

Ralph silently tore the hand from the wrist of the Priest, and lifted the body of the dead woman in his arms. When Stewel looked up he was confronted by that half-covered form; that face, stricken by pestilence in its most loathsome phase, was right before his eyes. The fixed eyeballs were glaring upon him; the naked arms dangling by the side of the corpse, only half concealed by the streaming hair, touched his hands.

At this moment the light died away and flashed up wildly, giving the raised corpse, a look which bore a ghastly resemblance to life.

"There! Take yer tin box!" shouted Ralph, and pushed the corpse against the breast of the Police officer. At the same instant he seized the mace and pistol, and started to the door.

"Follow me, and you'll git jesse!" cried Ralph as he opened the door, levelling the pistol at the face of Stewel.

"How do you like it, old hoss? Come and ask for a tin box when there's a dead woman about!"

Stewel shrank back horror-stricken from the cold touch of the corpse, and in his effort to release himself from that loathsome contact, he missed his footing and fell to the floor. The

body of the dead woman, fell heavily upon him, its face close to his own, its hair streaming over his shoulders.

"Good bye, old boy!" he heard the voice of Ralph, and then felt the jar of the closing door.

You may imagine that it was some time, ere the Police officer could recover sufficient presence of mind, to extricate himself from his unpleasant situation. Shuddering, in every fibre of his corpulent frame, he raised the corpse, and placed it once more upon the couch. Stewel's face was no longer red: every vestige of color had fled from his round fat cheeks.

He uttered an oath, and came round the bed, with unsteady steps, passing his hand over his eyes, as though he was the victim of some horrible dream.

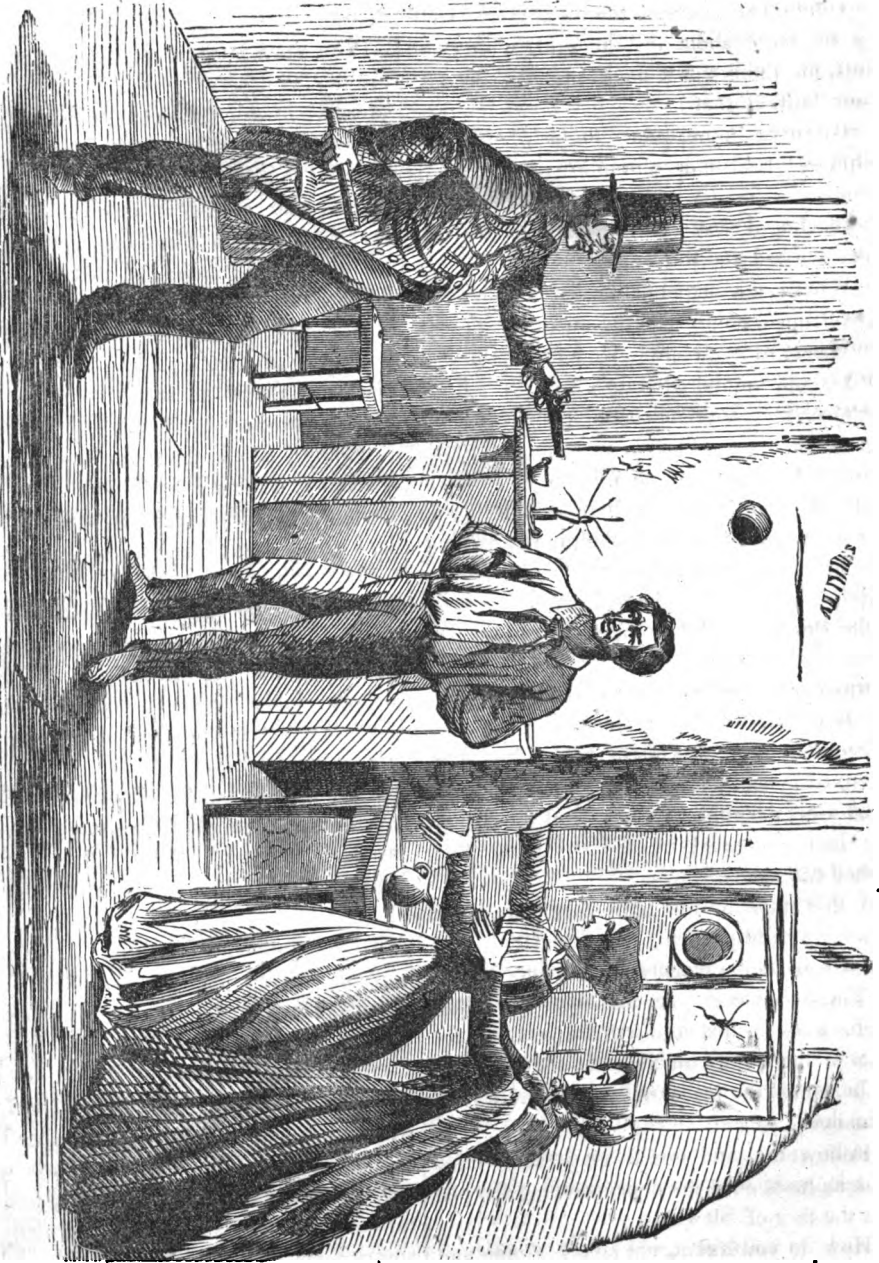
"Why cuss the thing, the boy is gone!" he ejaculated at last: "Where's the pistols? Hello! I'm sold — reglar'ly sold. Fire! murder! Stop thief!"

He was hurrying to the door, when his footsteps were arrested by the Priest, who aroused from his swoon by the action of Ralph, now stood silent and pale, in the centre of the room, his arms folded over his narrow chest. He lifted his eyes to the face of Stewel, without raising his downcast head.

"You herè? Lemuel Gardiner! That is to say, Father John, *alias* Converted Priest, *alias* Monk of Blarney! Why I thought you was a frin' at the Pope — aint this your lectur' night?"

Stewel stopped suddenly, and surveyed the man of a dozen aliases from head to foot. In this slender personage, with that coarsely featured face, surmounted by a black skull cap, Stewel recognized an old friend, whose real name long lost to the mass of Philadelphians, was vividly remembered by the Police Officer.

Lemuel Gardiner — whose name was uttered with curses by the dying woman — has returned to the Quaker City, after many years absence, and in a new character. Once known as a Converted Priest, then as a fugitive for Justice — behold him now, in the character of a Converted Monk. For Lemuel has taken the No-Popery people by the inmost heart, and Lemuel delivers lectures against the Pope, to audiences composed of boys and girls, at a



"LET HIM COME ON," GROWLED RAIPER: "IF HE SHOOTS HE'LL BE HUNG. AN' THERE AIN'T BEEN A POLICE OFFICER HUNG FOR THIRTY YEARS. WON'T IT BE A SIGHT? OCHENET! HOW HE'LL KICK!"—PAGE 146.

quarter of a dollar per head. Sweet lectures, too, composed of all that is foul in thought or language, and refreshingly spiced with a fervent hate of Rome, and all that appertains to the very name of Rome.

And now, Lemuel Gardiner, otherwise called Father John, and more frequently the Converted Monk, regarded Stewel with a cautious and searching look. His small eyes sunk deeper in their sockets, and his lips, remarkable for their gross expression, were agitated by a violent grimace.

"Stewel," he whispered, "We knew one another in other times—many years ago."

"We did hoss," was the quick response of the Police officer.

"You know me well, and I know you. To come to the question at once, did you ever hear of the Ship Falcon?"

His face was animated by a look of sudden malignity; his voice grew hard and strident.

"The Ship Falcon?" responded Stewel, "Why bless you 'Monk,' that's the slave ship, as has been seized by the 'Nited States authorities. She was brought in from the coast o' Brazil by an American Frigate. She's now layin' safe and snug, over yonder, in the bay o' New York."

"Very well," continued Lemuel, "Did you ever hear of *Captain Bradburne*?"

Stewel could not restrain an ejaculation, which was more remarkable for its nervous force than for its elegance or polish:

"Burn my time! Of course I have! Don't you think I read the papers? *Wonder if he overheard my talk with Ralph? Does he know anythin' about the tin box!*" The italicised words were uttered to himself, in a tone which was unintelligible to the 'Converted Monk.'

"Captain Bradburne was the commander of the Slave vessel," quietly remarked Lemuel.

"He escaped, just afore his ship was taken off Brazil," interrupted Stewel.

"The authorities have been in pursuit of him, for at least three months. They are very anxious to secure him, as he made himself notorious as the Captain of a Slave Ship—"

"Not mentionin' the half a million he's

made by that very respectable business," again interrupted Stewel.

Lemuel, without heeding this interruption, continued in a lower voice—"He has been heard of, since the seizure, in various parts of the Union. Under various names too, and in all kinds of disguises. Come, Stewel, what do you think his capture would be worth?"

He placed his hand abruptly upon Stewel's shoulder, as his small eyes, buried in their sockets, shone with a sudden and sinister lustre.

"Worth?" echoed Stewel, with a vacant stare, "Does he know anythin' o' th' tin box?" he added to himself.

"Why you know Stewel, that his capture will be worth at least ten thousand dollars to his captors. Suppose him once taken, and the proofs of his guilt brought clearly home to him?"

"He'd give ten thousand to get off—hey?"

"Or, the Government would give ten thousand, for proof, which would convict him. Do you understand Stewel?"

Stewel as if impressed by a new thought uttered an ejaculation, and struck his forehead violently with his clenched hand:

"Stoopid! Captain Bradburne of the Falcon!" he said in a low voice—"Did not I hear that name to-night somewhere? Where? Was it at Goodleigh's house?"

"Goodleigh?" cried Lemuel, "I think you uttered that name?"

"Caleb Goodleigh, the man what owns a mint or two of the dimes," answered Stewel, "He lives in ——— street and —"

"Caleb Goodleigh and Captain Bradburne are the same person," Lemuel's voice sank, while his eyes lifted up with a sudden lustre: "Do you understand me, now?"

"Ho, ho! Now I know what the tin box contained. Valleyable papers; indeed! I rather guess so. Why Lem, my dear, this Captain Bradburne 'ud give thirty thousand, yes fifty thousand to get off!"

One word in these somewhat incoherent remarks of the Police Officer arrested the attention of the 'Converted Monk.'

"The tin box? What do you know of the tin box?"

"It was stolen to-night from Goodleigh's

house. As we're chums now, I'll tell you the whole story.—The boy what jist escaped stole it—I was arter him, when you started up afore me. That box, that identical box, contained the proofs of Goodleigh's connection with the Slave trade? Hey? Come—there's no time to be lost. Let's make tracks arter him —”

“Hush!” said the ‘Converted Monk,’ raising his right hand with a gesture of caution: “The tin box contained valuable papers, but the most valuable are concealed in Goodleigh's house, in — Street. Do you want to arrest him to-night? Come with me. I have a key to his front door. You can secure him in his bed, while I search the Iron Room, where these papers are concealed.”

He moved a step toward the door, but Stewel grasped him by the arm:

“Wait a minnit,” he whispered, regarding the sinister face of the “Monk” with a suspicious glance: “You don't mean any foul play? If you do —” he paused and muttered in a vague manner — “The Iron Room! I think you mentioned a place o' that name. Where is it?”

“Come with me,” was the answer of Lemuel. “Once in Goodleigh's house, we can quietly arrange the plan of this important affair. Come —”

“Had not we better sarch for the tin box afore we leave?” suggested Stewel: “It's somewheres in this room —”

“Pooh, pooh! When we obtain the papers in the Iron Room, we will not need either the tin box or its valuable papers. Come — in an hour Goodleigh can be arrested and the proofs of his guilt secured.”

“We go sheers, don't we?” suggested Stewel, closing one eye.

“That rests with you. Money is not my object. I have an old account to settle with Captain Bradburne. That is all. When he is arrested, you may do what you please with the reward —”

“But suppose he makes an attempt to buy off? You said something about that?”

“Did I?” the face of Lemuel was agitated by an expression of doubt and wonder; “That must not, cannot be!” He placed his hand upon his forehead — “You must not think of anything of this kind, Stewel. The money,

which I will place in your hands, at Goodleigh's house, money which you can pocket without danger, will far exceed any bribe that he can offer you. But we lose time. Let us be going.”

He took his broad rimmed hat from the table, and as he turned to the door, his face was reddened by a sudden gleam of the waning light. Every feature was convulsed by emotion. The Corpse also warmed by the sudden flash, into a hideous mockery of life, lay stiff and gaunt before him.

“Ann Clark!” he muttered, “When I first saw you, in the home where you supported your aged mother, by the slavery of the needle, I little thought that we would ever part, to meet at last, in a scene like this!”

“None o' your nonsense ‘monk’ — move on,” exclaimed Stewel. By the bye hoss, jist explain the mystery o' that Iron Room as we go along.”

CHAPTER NINETEENTH.

JOHN CATTERMILL.

They left the room together, as the light flared up for the last time. And as he closed the door, Lemuel Gardiner, looked over his shoulder — looked once and for a moment, but with a shudder — at the bed, whereon was stretched the lifeless and distorted form of Ann, the friend of Alice Bayne.

Then the door closed, and they descended the stairs, in one darkness. At every step Lemuel whispered the name of Goodleigh, and gave Stewel a hurried description of the Iron Room in Goodleigh's House.

Presently they reached the first floor. The Quaker woman and the Millerite's Daughter were waiting there, but a third person had entered upon the scene.

It was the wife of John Cattermill, who with haggard face and dishevelled hair, poured forth a broken train of ejaculations, as she pressed her babe against her breast.

“O, John, John, how could he go to do it! Jist think of it Ma'am! To turn a thief at his years! I think I shall go crazy.”

“What *does* thee mean?” asked Martha Lott, who gazed upon that troubled face with a look of deep compassion: “Thee has been out in the cold, with but scanty covering. Be

calm—and tell me the cause of all this suffering—”

“Yes, Nancy, tell her the story, and she will do her best to relieve you,” interrupted a mild voice, and the face of Hannah Marvin, confronted the weeping woman: “What has become of your husband? He left the house, an hour ago—did he not?”

At this moment, the form of Stewel, emerged from the stairway door, the visage of Lemuel, scowling from the shadows, behind his broad shoulders.

“Lay low, ‘Monk!’” whispered the Police Officer: “Lay low, and hear something rich.”

And standing in the doorway of the stair-case, these respectable worthies, listened to the story of Nancy Cattermill:

“Why you see Ma’am, a couple of hours ago, when John had got over his fit o’ *delerious* tremens, and was sittin’ by the fire, talkin’ of Isr’el Bonus, there comes in, a fat man with a green patch over his eye, and a red face, a very red face—that is as much of it as could be seen.”

“That’s me,” whispered Stewel to his companion—“Don’t she take a pictur’ with a rare daguerreotype touch?”

“An’ this fat man begins to talk with John, and to tell him, what a shame it was that he was so poor. An’ then they talked in whispers—I couldn’t hear much—but I see’d John’s eyes light up, and after a long while heard him say—‘I’m-your man. For anything I’m your man.’ An’ then Ma’am they goes out together, John and the fat man with a green patch over one eye. I asks John where he was goin’, but he pushed me away, and — O! Is’nt it too bad? Don’t you think it is?”

She burst into a violent fit of sobbing.

“Don’t know she’s a detainin’ the audience,” whispered Stewel, still waiting in the stairway door: “I’d like to know what became o’ John arter this.”

Martha Lott and Hannah Marvin in vain endeavored to assuage the grief of the wretched woman. Gathering her babe in the tattered shawl, she sank into the only chair—turning her face toward the light, she continued:

“An’ I waited for John and waited, and waited, O! ever so long, but John did not come back. At last, a while ago, I went out

o’ the court, and went down the street, and stood at the next corner. It was bitter cold, but I tried to keep my baby warm as well as I could, an’ you don’t know how bad I felt, as I stood there all alone, thinkin’ o’ things as they are now, an’ o’ things as they were last year. O! sich a change!”

“A lick of pathos!” whispered Stewel.

“Well, thee waited?” said Martha Lott.

“Waited there, Ma’am, at the corner of the street, with my baby in my arms, and at last I hear’d a step, and know’d it was John’s, and I saw him comin’ across the street. ‘John, where have you been?’ says I, springin’ toward him, when—” she dropped her babe upon her lap, and wrung her hands—“when two strange men, who had follered John across the street, jumped upon him, and tied him, and took him off in a wagon. They did—and what’s worse than all, they said he was a thief—yes, that he’d been robbin’ a house in — street. I think they told me the name of the man who owned the house—Goodleigh, I think it was. And they took him off, and he’s in Moyamensin’ this blessed night. Don’t you think it’s hard, Ma’am?”

Before Martha could reply, the police officer stepped from the doorway, and followed by the converted Monk, approached the light with a measured stride. Stewel’s hands were in his pockets, and Stewel’s cap was drawn over his eyes, but beneath the leathern frontlet of that cap, his cheeks appeared in all the plenitude of bulk and color.

“Folks, I jist thought I’d mention to you; that the lady up stairs has gone out o’ this *sublunary* vale o’ tears,” said Stewel, “In other words, she’s dead. Did you see anythin’ o’ that scapegrace boy, Ma’am?” he added, turning to Martha Lott.

At the sound of his voice, Nancy Cattermill raised her face, and looked about her with a vague stare.

“Did you hear *that*?” she exclaimed, taking Martha Lott by the hand. “That voice, I mean. It’s his voice. The fat man, with the green patch over his eye, who came here, and turned my husband into a thief.”

She raised her eyes, and beheld the benevolent face of Stewel Pydgeon.

“It’s him—I know’d it!” cried Nancy, starting from the chair, with her babe in her

arms: "Now, Mister, jist tell us —— what did you do wth my husband?"

"This is a serious charge, friend," said Martha Lott—"Especially serious when we reflect, that thou art a police officer."

Stewel smiled blandly, smiled throughout his lips and cheeks, even to his eyes, half hidden in bulging lids.

"Lord bless you, Ma'am," he waved his hand with a gesture of great dignity: "It's a way they all have. Every one o' these creturs asks me for her husband. Jüst as if I carried a pocket-full o' husbands, wherever I go."

"You are a villian!" shrieked Nancy, clenching her hand: "Worse than Isr'el Bonus—that you are"

"Da-da-a, folks!" smiled Stewel, as he moved to the door. "Come along my Reverend friend. This society, no doubt, don't agree with your moral-wholesome."

He took the arm of the Converted Monk, and hurried him through the front door.

"I will see about this, to-morrow," whispered the Quaker woman, as she laid her hand upon Nancy's shoulder: "Thou shalt have justice. Thy husband shall be cared for. To-morrow, my friend."

Nancy heard the low musical voice. She raised her eyes, and caught the impassioned benevolence of the Quaker woman's countenance.

"God bless you!" cried Nancy with a burst of tears. "If there was more Quakers like you, there would not be many sich places as Bonus Court."

A few whispered words passed between Martha Lott and the Carpenter's wife, and then the Quaker woman took Hannah by the hand, and led her silently up the stairs, into the third story.

Nancy remained by the decaying fire, hushing her babe as it moaned in its slumber, and fixing her vacant gaze upon the walls of her desolate home.

Meanwhile in the third story, the Quaker woman, aided by the Millerite's daughter, performed the last sad offices for the dead. Together they straightened those cramped limbs. They were not afraid of contagion even in its most hideous shape. They smoothed the hair aside from the brow, and closed the eyes, and arranged the body of Ann Clarke, in an attitude of calm repose.

It was not without its meaning—that sight which the lamp revealed, as the last hours of the night were fading into day.

The daughter of the Millerite, kneeling beside the bed, her hands joined, her eyes uplifted in voiceless prayer. The Quaker woman, gazing upon the face of the dead, her eyes moistened with tears.

"O, if men and women, would only leave creeds and forms alone, and attend with all their souls, to those simple words of the Saviour, 'Love thy neighbor as thyself.'"

This was the muttered ejaculation of the Infidel Quakeress, who derided by all the synagogues of the Orthodox, found peace and religion, in visiting the homes of the desolate—the haunts of the poorest of the poor.

Hannah Marvin the daughter of the despised Millerite, said nothing for a long while; but as she remembered the good deeds of the Quaker woman—as she saw that noble face, lighted up by the warmth of a divine humanity—she could not repress an ejaculation, which bubbled from her heart to her lips:

"I, also, am an Infidel," she said, "That is, I had much rather possess your Infidelity, than the Christianity of many Churches."

Martha Lott you will remember, was a Rich Woman. That a Rich Woman should have the heart to feel for the poor, a hand to relieve their manifold miseries, a courage to enter the veriest dens of their wretchedness—all this excited much wonder, in the mind of the Millerite's Daughter.

But we must leave the place of death and follow the other persons of our history.

The poor woman lies stiff and cold in Bonus Court. Where are the children, whom she has loved with all a mother's love, for seventeen years?

CHAPTER TWENTIETH.

"FI-ER!"

Ralph in the streets once more!

Barefoot, cold and hungry, he was skulking in a narrow alley, which, gloomy at all times, was now dark as midnight. Far overhead some gleams of moonlight fell upon the icicles along the roofs, but around the wandering outcast all was dark, silent and dreary. He pulled his cap over his matted hair, folded his

arms upon his tattered jacket, stood for a moment upon one foot, and then upon the other, but still could not banish the cold, which sent a chill through his tired limbs.

"I should like to know where I'm to sleep to-night—I would. If I go home, Stewel 'ill ketch me. If I don't I'll freeze to death. It's a toss-up between Potter's Field and Moyamensing."

Ralph gazed up and down the narrow court; the shutters were closed, and not a gleam of light, from an upper window, broke the gloom of that desolate haunt.

"Where's Fan? I should like to see Fan. Jiminey! Won't she start, when I tell her to-morrow, how rich I am, and what a fortin' I'm heir to! Cuss me, but I wish I had some o' them bright pieces in my pocket jist now! On'y to think of a man o' fortin' like me, not havin' a crust to eat, nor so much as a cellar-door to sleep on!"

Running up and down the snow-covered pavement, Ralph endeavored to restore some warmth to his chilled limbs, but in vain. Stopping at last, in very despair, he sank upon a wooden step, muttering as he clenched his hands, this remarkable ejaculation:

"I wish the Old State House bell 'ud ring—I do. If there was only the least touch of a fire, the Fairy 'ud come out, and a feller 'ud have a chance to warm hisself. But there ain't no sich luck for me. There's lots o' Carpenter shops a'chein' to be burnt and nobody to burn 'em."

In the height of his chagrin, he dashed his cap upon the pavement, at the same time uttering an oath which it is not necessary to repeat.

"Wonder if day is ever a-goin' to come? There's a fine pair o' feet to be froze—ain't they? I rather expect, they'll find me in the mornin' layin' along the pavement, froze all over, into a perfec' chunk of ice. Then it 'ill be put into the papers—'*'Nother young vagrant froze hisself out o' spite.'* Won't it?"

For a moment, reader, surround yourself with the darkness and the cold of this narrow alley, which diverges from the broad street, like a by-path from a highway leading through a lonely forest. Picture the outcast, crouching on the wooden step, his naked feet upon the pavement, his cheeks supported by his bony

hands. Then call to mind this solitary fact: But for the crimes of Reuben Gatherwood and Lemuel Gardiner—Doctor and Priest—this savage of city life, would have been surrounded with the light of education and religion.

Something like the echo of an approaching footstep struck his ear. Ralph started up, and listened intently, while his heart beat violently against his ragged jacket.

"Is it a watchman? It can't be Stewel—hello! There she goes! Ding—dong—boom! The old State House forever! Now for the Fairy!"

These wild ejaculations, were produced by a very simple circumstance.

Deep and echoing, the sound of the State House bell, rolled over the silent city.

"F-i-e-r! F-i-e-r! F-i-e-r!" shouted Ralph at the top of his lungs, as he ran along the alley toward the neighboring street. "Give way there boys! Let her drive! Wake her up, Fairy—wake up I s-a-y!"

Before the third sound of the bell reaches our ears, Ralph is gone.

Poor fellow! Little does he dream, what singular events—events connected with his own history—are now being heralded in every tone of the State House bell!

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIRST.

BROTHER CALEB'S DREAM.

It is near daybreak, and the moon is shining brightly upon the broad front of Brother Caleb's House.

The carriage no longer waits in the shadows on the opposite side of the street. What has become of Lester's hardy friend, who at midnight was watching there, anxious to do the bidding of Ellen's Brother? We cannot tell. All is silent and deserted along the broad street. Brother Caleb's House, with its shutters fast closed, from the first story to the roof, glows in the moonlight, but is silent as the grave. Not a ray streams from a window, to tell us that this mansion is tenanted by a waking soul.

What deeds are those, which at the moment are enacting within the walls of Caleb Goodleigh's mansion?

We will enter the door, step quietly along

the broad entry, ascend the stairs, and pass into Brother Caleb's room on the second floor.

A lamp, which stands upon a small mahogany table, sheds its dim light over the curtains of Brother Caleb's bed. Very luxurious curtains, rich crimson in colour, velvet in texture, and spotted with small flowers and bees, embroidered in gold. The light falls upon one side of the bed, but all the rest of the chamber—you may picture its elegant furniture for yourselves—is enveloped in vague twilight.

The curtains are parted, and the light shines on Brother Caleb's face. His lean form wrapped in a blue satin dressing gown, he rests upon the coverlet, and turns him in his sleep, as though he was the victim of some troubled dream.

His face—whose bronzed hues and bold features are strongly defined against the soft satin of the pillow which supports his head—is turned to the light, and you discover that Brother Caleb is sleeping with his eyes wide open and teeth set firmly together. Brother Caleb's face, with sunken cheeks, wide mouth and thin lips, forehead widening over the brows, and eyes bulging from their lids, does not present a pleasant picture at any time, but now, agitated by the terrors of a dream, and mocked by the very contrast of the silken pillow and velvet curtain, it is as hideous as the phantom of a nightmare.

And yet he is sleeping there, the owner of the splendid mansion, like an unsightly kernel, within a rich, luxurious shell. He is so very, very rich. A bachelor, too, with no care of wife or child upon his soul. For him, a thousand, and ten thousand slaves, are waiting ever—not slaves with black faces, and owned by the life-time merely—but slaves of all hues and races, whose services he may purchase with his pieces of gold, and his slips of bank note paper.

There is something grand in the idea. Here sleeps a Rich Man who has no care, save that involved in the legal enjoyment of his appetites. His money—how gained, where acquired, is not your business—his money, is but the embodied toil of some ten thousand slaves; the work of ten thousand common people, petrified into bank notes and brick walls.

This money would make ten thousand poor men happy. This money would give educa-

tion to twenty thousand poor men's children. This money, properly applied, would deprive the penitentiary and the gallows of many a victim, and very likely turn every victim into an honest man.

But away with thoughts like these. Who talks of depriving Brother Caleb of his—PROPERTY? Property, however won, is defended by Law, and sanctified by Religion. Whatever robbery Property may choose to commit, it is your part to remain silent. But let any ragged wretch, pilfer only one of Property's bank notes, and you shall see, forthwith, that Property is soundly backed by Judge and Penitentiary.

One day I saw a crowd of meanly dressed women, holding children by their hands, go sadly up the marble steps of a Bank. That bank had failed, and these women and children were by its failure, deprived of the very means of life. There was no law for the woman and the child; there was no Judge, bold enough to try these robbers of the Bank.

Another day, I heard, that some thief—or band of thieves—had stolen seventy thousand dollars, from the President of a bank. At once the whole community was in uproar. The press rung out, the terrible theft, from Maine to the Rio Grande. Judges and juries were ready to try the thieves, and Courts sat week after week, in patient investigation, of the enormous crime. Fifty thousand dollars of the people's money, were spent in recovering seventy thousand dollars, which had been stolen from the Bank.

Do you wonder that I compared these two cases?

In the first case, a bank had robbed a crowd of women and children of at least one hundred thousand dollars. Other banks, by scores and hundreds, had committed similar robberies. Robberies, not of money merely, but of the very means of subsistence, robberies of life itself. And in these cases there was neither Judge, Jury, nor investigation of any kind.

But in the second instance, a Bank had been robbed—robbed of only seventy thousand dollars—and then Judges and Courts awoke, and Juries hungry to be just, sat up day and night, until the Bank, once more received the Stolen Dollars.

You need not wonder at the contrast be-

tween these cases. The explanation is as clear as a sunbeam. In one case PROPERTY was robbed; in the other, it was only LABOR. The laws, the courts, the judges, belong to Property. What Labor has on its side, is not often named: it is amply provided, however, with Factory, Almshouse, and Penitentiary.

And Brother Caleb was a Rich Man. Is there no music in that name? Rich Man! Rich because others have toiled by night and day, in hot and cold. Rich at all hazards, and in spite of every tie that binds the human heart to God; rich, upon the harvest of the common laborer's suffering; rich, with the price of blood! This may be. Yet he is Rich. That is enough. What a pity it is, for Brother Caleb, that his path covered with gold, must end at last at the same point which terminates the poor man's way, which is only paved with flints and thorns—end at last, at a narrow pit, seven feet long, by eight feet deep!

Why is not Brother Caleb immortal? Why must your Rich Men come down to dust and grave worms at last, just like your ragged common people? This question troubles me oftentimes. Why does the New Testament speak so terribly of Rich Men? Why does it pronounce the awful sentence of divine wrath upon the usurer, the money changer, and "the Rich Man," in all his varied shapes? This also causes me much anxiety. Could we not have a Rich Man's edition of the New Testament, with all improper expressions carefully expurged? Think of it. A Money Changer's Gospel, warranted not to offend any Rich Man in the world, or any Rich Corporation, from the last broken Bank, up to Trinity Church. It is a fine idea; ponder upon it, Preachers and Vestrymen of the Rich Churches.

While these thoughts pass over me, I am often forced, against my will, to frame a thought like this:

Suppose every poor man in the world, could be removed to some other state of being only for a month, leaving the globe to the care of your Men of Money. What a scene would ensue—just picture for a moment! Rich Men dining on gold, wearing bank notes, and sleeping upon parchment title deeds—it would be very singular. Trinity Church would find a hard time of it, then. How would it pay its

Preachers, and feed its Vestrymen? Could they eat brick walls, and drink ground rents?

So, we must be forced to the conclusion: *All the comfort, wealth and luxury in the world, is produced by the sinew of labor—labor that is oftentimes without a crust to eat or a couch for its repose.*

And some day perchance—a thousand years hence it may be—this ragged and hungry Labor, may open its eyes and say to Property, certain words, which I dare not write, but which you can easily imagine.

But while we are preaching upon the sacred rights of Property; our friend, Brother Caleb, tosses uneasily upon his silken pillow, and turns his writhing features, from side to side.

Rich, very rich, he is still afflicted by a hideous dream. This dream divides itself into four scenes, which sometimes appear to his soul as separate pictures, and then melt confusedly into each other, like the colors of a kaleidoscope.

First, Brother Caleb beholds a brave ship resting upon the waters of a waveless sea, under a burning sky. The sky is without a cloud, the ship is distinctly mirrored in the glassy surface of the becalmed ocean, and the sun, from the very centre of the heavens, pours down a flood of intense, yes, intolerable heat.

"My good ship Falcon!" muttered Brother Caleb in his dream. "If we land the cargo at Cuba, we will clear two hundred thousand dollars."

Then from the lower decks, yes from the nooks, and caverns of this gallant Ship, the "cargo" comes crawling into light. For it is a living cargo. It breathes, eats and drinks, and may be sold, for actual dollars. It is composed of three hundred men and women and children, who now throng the deck, and gaze with fevered eyes, upon the fiery sky.

But lo! a boat, propelled by oars, and bearing armed men, with the Flag of the Union at the helm, appears on the horizon, within sight of the telescope, and skims silently over the waters. It is many a mile away, but Brother Caleb sees it with his telescope and knows it well.

"The boat of that cursed frigate, which has pursued me for days, and which I would have escaped but for this calm." Thus he murmurs in his dream.

The boat comes nearer—what shall Brother Caleb do? Make resistance? The idea is vain, for two-thirds of his men are sick with a plague, engendered by the foul atmosphere of the Slave Ship. Shall Brother Caleb be taken, on board of his good ship Falcon, and arrested as a Slaver, a sort of mercantile Pirate, whose Capital is flesh and blood?

Look with your own eyes, and see how Brother Caleb relieves himself from his peril.

The negroes are sent below, and then brought forth again, one by one. To the plank with him, to the plank with her, to the plank with every one! Weights of iron and lead are tied to each negro's limbs, and a walk along a plank, followed by a sudden plunge into the still ocean, removes the cargo, from the sight of day. Thus Brother Caleb rids himself of his cargo—men, women, children, all, are quietly put out of sight, under that fervid sky, and beneath the gloomy surface of that waveless sea.

"Ho, ho, now let them come," laughed Brother Caleb in his dream. "Overboard with handcuffs and manacles—overboard with every thing that may even hint the character of our late cargo. Up with the Star-Spangled Banner, and then we'll see who dares to call our good Falcon by the name of *Slaver*."

This was the first part of Brother Caleb's dream. The light beside the bed shone full upon his cold blue eyes, as his soul became absorbed in the details of a new scene.

"Come, Lemuel, we are in Paris, and we will have a quiet game of *rouge et noir*. This way—up the stairs, my boy—we are in Frascati's saloon. Stake your money, on the red, on the red, my good fellow."

And in his dream, he saw his friend Lemuel Gardiner stake his money on the red, until twenty thousand dollars—the heritage of Annie and Harry Bayne—had passed from Lemuel's hands.

"Poor Lem!" mutters Brother Caleb—"So unsuspecting! Little does he dream that ten of the twenty thousand passed into my hands."

In his sleep his chest heaved violently, and he made an effort to raise his hands to his face, but they remained cramped and stiffened by his side.

Then came the third part of his dream.

A beautiful woman with golden hair and

eyes of summer blue. Alone in a darkened chamber, she awaits the coming of Dr. Gatherwood.

"Alice Bayne!" mutters brother Caleb, and then pursues this scene to its sequel.

It must have been a fearful sequel, for as he dreamt it over, Brother Caleb's forehead was wet with beaded moisture.

The last scene of the dream.

Brother Caleb stood at the foot of a stairway, which led upward—far, far upward, into the clouds. It seemed to him, that he was forced to ascend this stairway, whose every step of cold white alabaster, quivered to and fro, like the folds of a curtain. He shrank shuddering from the first step, but an invisible influence urged him onward. In his dream he began to ascend.

And as in his dream, he touched the first step of the stairway, he arose from the bed, and clad in the loose dressing gown, took the light from the table.

He moves to the door of his chamber, while his eyes are cold and death-like, imagining that at every step across the velvet carpet, he is gaining another step upon the stairway of his dream.

He passes into the entry, still asleep, although his limbs possess the power of motion. He begins slowly to ascend that wile stairway of his own mansion, up which he passed with Charles Lester, an hour ago. And while his body ascends the real stairway, his soul is absorbed with the endless stairway, which leads upward, into infinite space.

Is it not a strange spectacle? Light in hand, the dressing gown flowing loosely around his gaunt frame, he passes upward, with a noiseless step, at the same time, gazing straight forward with his fixed eyeballs.

Following the windings of the stairway, he reaches the third floor, and his light streams in uncertain gleams, upon the entry below.

Two figures steal from the shadows—they approach the stairway and look upward toward the light. You recognize the rubicund face of Stewel Pydgeon, and the spare form and harsh features of Lemuel Gardiner, "the Converted Monk."

While the lamp sheds a dim light from the third floor, listen to the hurried conversation of those men:

"Who is it Lem? Kin you see his face?" asks Stewel.

"Yes—yes—it's Goodleigh," whispered Lemuel, grasping the bannister of the staircase. "Awake too, and at this hour!"

"Then our cake is all dough," again said Stewel.

Lemuel presses his hand to his forehead, and at that moment the light passes away.

"I have not gained entrance into this house, at this hour, for nothing," says Lemuel with an oath: "Wait here, Stewel. I will go up stairs, and meet him face to face. When I call, you come—will you?"

"Yes, my dear," responded Stewel.

"Wait," whispers the Converted Monk and with that word he stealthily ascends the stairs.

As he reaches the top, a sudden light flashes upon his face. He beholds the form of Brother Caleb, as he stands before the door of an apartment, on the third floor.

"He goes to the Iron Room," the thought half escapes Lemuel's lips, and at the very moment Brother Caleb disappears.

Cautiously along the entry, steals Lemuel Gardiner. He listens for a moment at the door—all is still—but the light from within streams once more into his face.

"I will enter, and meet him face to face," he mutters, and pushing open the door, enters the apartment. It is the same into which Brother Caleb conducted Charles Lester, an hour ago.

Brother Caleb is there. His back toward Lemuel, he holds the light extended in his right hand, and pauses before a narrow doorway, which is sunken in the thickness of the wall.

"The door of the Iron Room!" mutters Lemuel.

Through that door, you remember, not long ago, Charles Lester disappeared.

Lemuel does not pause, although his blood is cold and hot by turns—although his heart leaps to his throat. He glides on tip-toe across the floor, he stands directly behind Brother Caleb, as Brother Caleb is gazing upon the panel of the narrow door.

It is a moment of feverish suspense.

Clenching his hands, Lemuel surveys the tall form of Goodleigh, awaiting with set

teeth and hushed breath, the moment when he shall turn and look into his face.

"It rocks, this cursed stairway, but I shall soon gain its summit," thus Brother Caleb, still asleep, murmurs as he ascends the stairway of his dream.

The sound of his voice, breaking so abruptly upon the stillness, penetrates Lemuel at once with the extremity of cowardice and hardihood. He is resolved to dare the worst, although he trembles in every nerve.

Brother Caleb turns, and looks into the face of Lemuel, with his glassy eyes.

Here, at the entrance of the Iron Room, let us leave them for a little while, and take up the adventures of Charles Lester. It is an hour since he passed that threshold. Let us relate the history of that hour.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SECOND.

THE IRON ROOM.

Charles Lester, unconscious of threatened evil, passed through the narrow doorway, and surveyed the place, which was disclosed in all its details, by the light of his candle.

It was a room or closet not more than six feet square. The walls, the ceiling and the floor were formed by solid panels or plates of iron. There was no window in these iron walls; no other entrance to the closet, than the doorway through which Charles had passed.

"It looks like a coffin," said Charles with a smile, as the flame of his upraised candle, well-nigh touched the ceiling: "It was doubtless built into the thick walls, long ago, as a place of safety for title deeds and gold. But now, there is nothing in the place that I can see, neither chest nor money-bag. Not even a window—yes! upon my word there is an aperture near the ceiling, about a foot square. Does it open in the neighboring closet Goodleigh?"

He turned on his heel, surprised by the silence of Goodleigh, and beheld—with what emotions you may imagine—that not only Goodleigh, but also, the secret door had disappeared. The wall before his gaze was composed of iron panels of equal dimensions, reaching from the iron ceiling to the iron floor,

but all traces of the secret passage had been suddenly obliterated.

Charles slowly paced the narrow space, in which he found himself a prisoner, examining with a careful scrutiny every point of the iron panels, every foot of the iron floor. The only opening in the walls—that aperture twelve inches square, in one corner, and near the ceiling—did not escape his observation.

“What does Goodleigh mean? To make me a prisoner in this closet? The idea seems incredible, and yet the man is capable of almost anything in the form of treachery.”

He soon became conscious that the candle which he held, began to lose the brightness of its rays, burning dim and faint, as with the pressure of a confined and unwholesome atmosphere.

And then his chest began to heave and swell, and an uneasy sensation agitated the muscles of his throat.

He cast an affrighted glance over the sombre walls which enclosed him, above, around, and below, as a coffin shuts in the dead.

He beat his clenched hand against the panels, seeking with a pallid cheek and brightening eye, the spring or lock which commanded the secret door. Holding the light in one hand, he thrust the other through the square aperture near the ceiling, but it encountered nothing but the air. All his exertions to discover a mode of egress from this “vault above ground,” were in vain. The air became more dense and difficult to breathe. The light, every instant, burned with a fainter lustre. Charles Lester, imprisoned within these iron walls, felt a chill creep through every vein, while his brain swam, as in a deadly vertigo.

“Goodleigh! Goodleigh!” he shouted, but the iron ceiling flung back his voice without an echo. “Goodleigh! Release me, and I promise eternal silence.”

He spoke with difficulty. There was, of course, no answer to his frenzied exclamations.

“Death in any form but this,” he gasped, “But here it seems I am *buried alive*. And while I am dying here, the poor girl, perchance in the next room, is listening to the voice of Edmund Jarvis—listening to the voice, which once spoke Ellen’s death-sentence, and which never speaks, save to betray!”

Let us draw the veil over the mental agonies of the imprisoned man.

No words can depict the horror which palsied his soul while an hour passed away.

At the end of the hour, behold him, prostrate on the iron floor, his eyes feverish with despair, uplifted to the solitary aperture near the ceiling.

Near his arm stood the candle, its pale light illumining with but a faint glare the surface of the iron panels.

Was it the sound of human voices, that reached the ears of the bewildered man? Voices, heard through the aperture, and broken in their distinctness by walls of brick and stone? Was it the voice of Fanny, or the accents of the Preacher, which came faint and murmuring to the leaden ear of Charles Lester?

Even as he listened, his consciousness slowly faded from him. He sank on his back, with his hands outspread, and his face toward the ceiling. The dim light glowed faintly upon his pale face, and tinted with faint color the masses of his dark brown hair. Overpowered as much by the disease, which had for months been slowly working at his heart-strings, as by the confined atmosphere of the Iron Room, Charles Lester has laid himself down to die.

That disease, solely the result of long continued mental anguish, defies all medical analysis. It kills its victim by slow degrees. What Physicians call it, I cannot tell; but to me it seems to be only the destruction of the body, by the silent action of the soul. The soul, by its will, desires to surrender to earth, its earth-born organization. It wishes to be free: sick of earth, it pants for the pure air of a Better World.

And brave Charles Lester, whose life has been wrecked in its youth of hope, by the deliberate crime of a consecrated Minister, has laid himself down to die. His lip moves, his eyes unclose, his hand is stretched forth toward the light, and then he is motionless as stone.

The candle sheds only a feeble and dying ray.

Meanwhile, in the next room the Preacher is alone with the daughter of Alice Bayne. Not in the room through which Lester reached the closet of Iron. But in the chamber which

lies beyond yonder the aperture in the panels. That aperture opens into a closet, and beyond the closet, lies the room which we are about to enter.

While Charles Lester is dying, let us slowly lift the curtain from one of the most glorious scenes in the Preacher's life.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THIRD.

THE STUDY OF THE PREACHER.

Tread lightly, reader, and compose your features into a look of reverence and awe—for we are about to enter the "STUDY OF THE PREACHER." In the third story of his mansion, Brother Caleb has set this chamber apart, as the especial haunt of Edmund Jervis. Here, when sick of the world, and eager to escape its crowds of flatterers, the good man may withdraw within himself, and devote an hour to uninterrupted meditation.

It is a small chamber, with one door, leading into the entry on the third floor, and two windows, looking into the wide street. Now the windows are closed; the very panes are covered with silken hangings. The walls are covered with a light drapery of faint crimson, spotted with gold and silver flowers. A lamp, shaded by a clouded glass, sheds a rich and softened light through the apartment. That lamp stands upon a desk, which is covered with volumes of sermons, with loosely scattered letters, and with pen, inkstand, and letter-paper. Beside the desk, an opened trunk, packed with fashionable attire, and with disguises, suitable for any adventure which may chance to engage the mind of our Popular Preacher. Amid the heap of fine apparel, a manuscript volume peeps into light, bearing on its first broad page, in the delicate hand-writing of Jervis himself, this significant title—"MEMOIRS OF A PREACHER. *To be published after my death.*"

Near the trunk, is a marble dressing-stand, well furnished with all the details of an exquisite's *toilette*: phials of perfumes, patchoulli, orange, cologne; cakes of scented soap; oil for the Preacher's hair, and cosmetics for the Preacher's skin. A half-dozen of the finest cambric handkerchiefs, carefully laid one upon the other, complete the picture.

Look at it as you will, the room with crim-

son hangings, spotted with gold and silver flowers, is a very comfortable place, in every way adapted, for the more retired devotions of the Popular Preacher.

He is sitting in a velvet cushioned chair, near the desk. He has thrown his frock coat aside. A gaily flowered dressing gown floats in loose folds from his shoulders to his slippered feet. A spotless vest, with a rolling collar, clothes his chest, and entwines his slender waist. Resting his elbow on the back of the chair, crossing one leg over the other, in an attitude of careless ease, he gazes intently, yet with a smile, upon the face of the Poor Girl.

Opposite, also seated on a velvet cushioned chair, with her hands placed on her knees, and her eyes glassy with the magnetic slumber, behold the unconscious maiden.

Does she not look very beautiful, as the mild radiance falls over her warm cheek, and bathes the tresses of her raven hair? Still clad in the velvet boddice, which reaching from the waist to the neck, discloses the outline, while it leaves the entire loveliness of her shape to the imagination: still enveloped in the blue skirt, which flows in loose folds from her waist to her feet, behold the Daughter of Alice Bayne, as her soul is entirely subject to the will of the Popular Preacher.

A half an hour may have elapsed, since the good man entered this room.

In that time, he has gathered from her lips all the mysteries of her life, which in her waking state, she herself could not know.

No longer opposed by the antagonist Will of Charles Lester, he has commanded her soul to traverse every scene of her life, from the hour when Alice her mother sank into death, until the present moment, when she is face to face with Edmund Jervis.

He gazes at her, with one of those smiles which make his face look young and even handsome. Listen to his half-spoken soliloquy:

"And so, my pretty one, you are not altogether the child of poverty and shame! A rich man's child—is it so? And your father did not drown himself in the Schuylkill, seventeen years ago? Arthur Bayne lived—fled to the west—took the name of Arthur Baldwin, and became eminent as a Physician. And Arthur Baldwin lived in that town of

Prairie-Home, which was also the native place of Ellen Lester. He attended Ellen in her last hours—and to Ellen's Brother confided the secret of his life—of your life, and of your brother's—for it seems you have a brother. Soh, soh, this explains Lester's presence in Philadelphia. He has money—money for you—well, well. I am wearing away, and need the comforts of a home. We will be married Fanny, my child: married my dear. Lester may oppose the match, but there is one way, by which his consent may be forced. Let me place all the strength of circumstances on my side."

Making one or two passes, with both hands, the Preacher soon aroused the girl from her magnetic slumber. Her eyes began to assume their natural lustre. Rosy flushes of warmth gave a new light to her cheek. Her bosom heaved with an even and natural pulsation. After a few moments she started in her chair and looked around with a vague stare, like one who has been suddenly aroused in the depth of a dreamless slumber.

"Where am I?" cried Fanny, looking at the hangings, the desk, the lamp, and then surveying her own form, clad in such unusual attire. "Where am I? It is a dream. I am not awake."

"You are awake, my child," was the kind response of the Preacher: "Awake, and in the care of your friends."

"My mother"—faltered Fanny, raising her hand to her brow, in an effort to recover the control of her memory.

"Your mother is well, that is the person who has passed for your mother is well. But my child, you must listen to me. I have a singular revelation to make. A few hours ago, while I was preparing to accompany you to the home of your supposed mother——

"My *supposed* mother!" echoed Fanny.

"You fainted, yes, my child, you fainted, whether from anxiety, or from too long exposure to the cold, I cannot tell. I then discovered—it matters not how—that you are the child of a dear and valued friend of mine, who lives out west, in the State of Illinois. I am lately from the west, my dear. I am charged to seek you out, and bring you back to the arms of your father. Instead of being the daughter of the poor woman with whom

you have resided, you are the child of the wealthy Dr. Arthur Baldwin, of Prairie-Home, Illinois."

Fanny opened her beautiful dark eyes, in a vague and dreamy stare.

"It cannot be so," she exclaimed—"You are making sport of me——"

"It can, and it is, my child," said the Preacher emphatically, as he drew his chair nearer to the girl: "Seventeen years ago, your father resided in this city. Your mother died, my dear, in the act of giving you life. But mark you, the person whom you call by the name of mother——"

"She is my mother, Ann Jones, and my name is Fanny Jones," exclaimed Fanny, clenching her small hand, as she spoke in a tone of decided emphasis.

"This Ann Jones, having an old grudge against your father, stole both you and your brother——"

"Ralph," ejaculated Fanny.

"—From the paternal roof. Your father sought for his children for two years, and sought in vain. At last broken-hearted, he went to the west, to die. But he mastered his sorrows, became successful as a Physician, and is at the present time, the wealthiest man in his county. Six months ago, he was informed by a Philadelphian, that Ann Jones was still in existence, and that she lived in an obscure court, with two children, whom she called her own, but whom it was strongly surmised, did not belong to her. I need not tell you that this made the deepest impression on your father. Aware that I was about coming to Philadelphia, he entrusted the management of this matter to me. And to-night, my child, I left you insensible in the care of my good friend Caleb. I hastened to your residence. I listened to the confession of this Ann Jones—she believed it to be her last confession, but she will recover—and from that confession, I derived a knowledge of the truth. You are the child of Arthur Baldwin! To-morrow you leave Philadelphia, on your way to the house of your father! You and your brother, will together journey to the west, under my care. Now, do you understand me, my good child!"

Smooth and persuasive were the accents of the Preacher. Fanny heard every word, look-

ing all the time into that face, where honor and sincerity seemed to have made their immovable stamp.

"No! No! I cannot believe it!" she cried, clasping her hands, while her form was agitated in every pulse: "It is a dream—only a dream—"

Again the Preacher spoke. Taking her hand he told the story over again, and confirmed its every point, by new and overwhelming evidence. Fanny was forced to believe in spite of herself. She did not swoon with the surprise; but her cheek grew death-like; she swayed to and fro upon her chair, and would have fallen to the floor, had not the Preacher caught her in his arms.

"Yes, yes, you shall see your father," he said, gazing upon her face, which pale and flushed by turns, was bathed in tears. "In less than a month, you shall see him, my child." He kissed her kindly—perchance warmly—on the lips: "Ralph, your brother, shall go with you—" again he pressed his mouth to her lips—"and this poor Ann Jones shall be forgiven, and cared for."

The Preacher placed her on her chair again, twining his fingers in the waves of her loosened hair—in an absent way of course—as he exclaimed: "To-night you will rest in this house, my dear—to-morrow we begin our journey."

Poor Fanny utterly bewildered, shaded her eyes from the light, and remained for some moments absorbed in thought.

Had a thought ever crossed her brain before, that instead of being the child of poverty and want, she was indeed the daughter of respectability and wealth?

It is needless to tell you, reader, that the truth of her life, had, in the mouth of the Preacher, been interwoven with a web of intricate falsehood.

Arthur Bayne had in reality fled to the west, and risen into eminence as a Physician, under the name of Arthur Baldwin. He had been long convinced of the death of his children, when he received intelligence from an unknown person that Annie and Harry were still living, under the care of Ann Clarke. Before his decease (which took place at Prairie-Home soon after the death of Ellen,) he en-

trusted Charles Lester with his last Testament, which bequeathed all his real estate, together with fifteen thousand dollars in money, to his lost children, Annie and Harry Bayne.

In his dying moments, he besought Charles to hasten to Philadelphia and make search for these children. In case the search proved unsuccessful, Charles Lester would become his heir.

The other details connected with this trust the reader will doubtless gather from the current of our history.

From the young girl, while in the magnetic state, the Preacher derived a full knowledge of these facts, which he distorted in order to suit his own purposes.

"I will see my father!" whispered Fanny, with an accent of inexpressible rapture as she lifted her eyes to the light, while her face kindled into a warm loveliness, that was hallowed by her tears: "I shall see my father! And Ralph will be removed from the city, from want, from cold, from misery and temptation! O, the news is too good to be true!"

Very beautiful was Fanny, as she bent forward in her chair, clasping her hands and raising her streaming eyes to Heaven.

"You can't imagine what a beautiful valley of the prairie spreads around your father's home!" The Preacher spoke in his blandest whisper, and with persuasion—eloquence—in his sparkling eyes: "There it stands—I see it now—a white mansion, amid a grove of oaks, with a garden on one side and a wide sweep of lawn on the other. Through the trees you catch a glimpse of the river, and as you wander upon the lawn, the deer, browsing quietly, as though impressed with the peaceful atmosphere of the place, raise their large eyes but do not start and tremble at your tread. And then the flowers, my child, O, you should see the flowers! They clothe the prospect on every side, grouping at the feet of the old trees, starting up from the grass, trembling over the river, until you might imagine yourself in Eden."

Fanny uttered an ejaculation of delight. Beneath the dark bodice her bosom heaved and fell, as with the very fullness of youth and hope. The Preacher surveyed her ardently and continued:

"A road passes near your father's house.

In a week or so, my child, we will stand at the entrance of your father's place. With you on one arm and Ralph on the other, I will lift the latch of the gate, and enter the walk which winds among the trees, up to your father's door."

"Yes—yes"—gasped Fanny.

"He will come forth to meet us! I see him stand upon the porch—his venerable hairs bathed in the morning sun. He beholds you as you draw near. He pauses for a moment in doubt, and then you hear his voice, as he comes trembling to you with outspread arms—'My Daughter! My Son!' And then, ah! then the lost children will find a father and a home!"

"Father! Father!" cried Fanny, starting from the chair, as the picture drawn by the Preacher took bodily shape before her eyes. She spread forth her arms as if to clasp her father's neck. Blushing, trembling, panting, she fixed her eyes upon vacancy, as though there, in the twilight of the room, she beheld the mild face of her father smiling welcome to his long lost daughter.

"But this is not all—" exclaimed the Preacher, starting to his feet and taking her hand within his own. "This is not all, for —"

A slight sound, heard audibly through the profound stillness, interrupted his words. It was very much like the creak of a suddenly opened door. The Preacher turned his head over his shoulder, and as his glance pierced the shadows, a deep ejaculation escaped his lips:

"Curse me, why didn't I lock the door."

Frightened at the changed expression of the Preacher's face, Fanny turned as if to gaze upon the cause of his alarm, and in the action fell forward upon his breast.

"I've heer'd you talk considerable. Thought I'd drop in and take a look for mesself. How air you?"

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOURTH.

MAGIC IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

A tall, broad-shouldered form, advanced to the circle of light, as these words pronounced in a gruff bass, penetrated Fanny's ears.

Fanny supported by the Preacher's arms, her face upon his bosom, cast a sidelong glance upon the intruder.

She beheld a huge, almost gigantic form, attired in a singular costume, composed of a cap of course grey fur, a scarlet great coat ornamented with buttons the size of a dollar, and corduroy pantaloons inserted in the tops of ox-hide boots.

Above a plaid neckerchief, appeared a hardy face, tanned by wind and sun, with whiskers white as snow, and eyes brilliant as lighted coals.

"I'm sixty years old," said the Giant: "Heap of rascals I've known in my time. Pour 'em all into a mould and run 'em out into one com-plete scoundrel and yit that scoundrel won't hold a candle to *you*!"

From one pocket the Giant Peter—for it was our old friend—drew forth something very much like a pistol, and from the other, he produced another something, which might have been a gag and which might have been a grid-iron.

"I've heer'd you. I know you. I say—" his voice growing deeper and hoarser, quivered as with rising rage—"I know'd Ellen!"

The Preacher appeared to be much surprised by this intrusion. Scarce conscious that he held the trembling girl in his arms, he looked towards the huge Peter, but did not seem to see him, nor to be conscious of his presence.

"Come g-a-l. Come 'long with me," said Peter, dropping the something which looked like a gag, into his pocket, and extending his brawny hand.

"It's a robber," whispered the Preacher.

"No, no, I will not go with you," cried Fanny, scarce knowing what she said, as she clung to the Preacher's neck.

"You won't?" Peter burst into a roar of laughter—"Good *that*. Tell you he's a scoundrel. Druv Ellen to her grave. Killed her Father. Killed her brother. A devil in a white cravat. Come 'long. I 'spose your Doctor Baldwin's da'ter—Charley told me suthin' and I heer'd the rest."

"No, no, I will not go with you," faltered Fanny, clinging yet closer to the Preacher.

"You must go with me?" cried Peter, "tell you gal he's been lyin' too. It's his way

Told you Dr. Baldwin was alive." A lie gal. Dr. Baldwin's dead. Been dead this year."

Fanny heard these words, and turning her head over her shoulder, looked into Peter's face, with an expression of vague terror.

"My father dead? It cannot be!" She turned to the Preacher, looking into his eyes, her breath fanning his face: "He is not dead! Speak! O, you would not deceive me!"

"Your father lives, my child," whispered the Preacher: "This person knows nothing of you or your family."

Peter seized his pistol by the barrel, as though it were a mace or club.

"I give you two minnits to let go the gal and come along with me," his voice was hoarse with anger, and his eyes shone with a significant expression: "Jist refuse, and I'll tip you over as I would a mad dog."

He drew nearer, and clenched the pistol with a determined grasp. Jervis began to recover from the overwhelming surprise and dismay, occasioned by the sudden intrusion of the giant Peter. A thought flashed through his brain. Could he but carry this thought into action, all his plans might be accomplished without difficulty.

"Whar's Lester?" asked Peter; "What have you done with the boy?"

"Be seated, my child," whispered Jervis forcing Fanny into a chair; "Now Sir, I am prepared to listen to you." Thus speaking, he confronted the giant, gazing steadily into his face, as he inserted his thumbs into the arm-pits of his white vest.

Fanny shuddered as she remarked the contrast between the two.

Peter, strong and rugged, his huge form clad in a red overcoat, which displayed the magnitude of his burly chest. The Preacher, slender and diminutive — at least in comparison — his graceful form, enveloped in the folds of a loose dressing gown. One armed not only with a giant's strength, but with a deadly weapon; the other, altogether inferior in strength, and without pistol or weapon of any kind.

"W-a-l?" said Peter, with a burst of laughter: "You aint a-goin' to fight, *air* you?"

"You are armed, I am defenceless," said the Preacher: "You can crush me with superior strength, yes, you can kill me with a sin-

gle blow of your brawny fist. But that would n't be a *coward's* deed — would it, my friend?"

Peter dropped the pistol into his pocket.

"Never use fire-arms to reptyles," he exclaimed, extending his open hand: "Thar! D'ye see *that*?"

While Fanny, clasping her hands, surveyed the twain, with a look of terror and suspense, the Preacher, still calm, although very pale, devoted every faculty of his soul to the accomplishment of his Thought.

"You are a strong man," he whispered, "and yet you are afraid to let me grasp your hand."

Peter laughed all over his sunburnt face.

"I *am* rather afeerd," he chuckled, "Thar! Don't hurt me! Please don't, that's a good man."

He extended his brawny hand, which the Preacher clutched in a peculiar manner.

"Now is the moment for my *thought*," he muttered: "If it fails I am lost."

For a moment, he grasped the brawny hand, without speaking a word, while his eyes, flashing with steady light, were fixed upon the eyes of the giant. Peter regarded him with a grimace of pretended terror —

"Don't hurt me if you please!" he said.

Fanny, half starting from the chair, watched the issue of the scene, with quivering suspense.

"Now, Sir, you are afraid to extend your right arm," whispered the Preacher, still grasping the left hand of the giant: "Afraid I say!"

"Thar it is," — and Peter quite jocularly, extended his right arm, clenching his fist in the action. "It don't look like gallopin' Consumption — hey?"

The Preacher gave a sudden and peculiar pressure to Peter's left hand, and then whispered:

"Now if you dare, stretch forth your other arm!" he released the hand, and made a rapid pass, from the giant's temples to his brawny chest.

Peter stretched forth his left arm, and clenched his left hand. Thus, with both arms extended, throwing his brawny chest into light, he resembled the figure of a colossal cross.

The Preacher stooped and touched him on the knees. Then rising again, he rapidly

passed his hands over the arms, breast, and mouth of our good friend Peter.

"Now, Sir," he cried in a voice which swelled deep and bold through the stillness: "You cannot close your arms! You cannot move a foot—You cannot open your mouth! I defy you! You are in my power! Aye, struggle, if you will—it is out of your power to move or speak!"

Was this Magic? Starting to her feet in wonder, Fanny beheld the huge form of the giant, standing in the centre of the room, motionless as a figure of stone, save that a slight movement, agitated his closed lips and outstretched arms.

"You are in my power! You cannot speak—You cannot move! I defy you to do either! Fanny, my child, look upon this palsied wretch, and behold the power of Heaven!"

The Preacher solemnly raised his right hand above his head.

"You would steal this child from my care? Speak, if you can! Dr. Baldwin is dead—is he, indeed?"

Stiffened in every nerve, palsied in every fibre of his giant frame, Peter stood with outstretched arms, closed lips and clutched hands—stood like a frozen man—without the power of speech or motion.

The Preacher, flushed and triumphant, still raised his hand to heaven, and defied the palsied man to speak or move.

"It is the hand of Heaven!" gasped Fanny, as she surveyed the strange scene with a feeling of irrepressible terror. "He came hither with a lie on his lips, and the lie has choked his utterance."

The Preacher hastily took his frock-coat from a chair, and in a moment it replaced the dressing-gown. Then placing his hat upon his brown hair, he passed Fanny's arm through his own.

"Come, my child," he whispered, "Heaven has placed this man in our power; let us leave him to the contemplation of his sins!"

Alas for Peter!

He saw the Preacher and the girl pass before him, but had not the power to move or speak. Turning his head over his shoulder, he gazed into the shadows, and beheld the Preacher in the act of taking the key from the lock, while Fanny was gliding through the

opened door-way. And yet Peter stood with arms outstretched and lips sealed, his sinews writhing, his face distorted by his struggles.

He saw the Preacher pass through the door-way, saw the door close after him, and the next instant heard the sound of the key turning in the lock.

And ere that sound had died upon his ears, the power of speech and motion returned to him, like the gift of a new life. At the same moment, he closed his arms violently upon his chest, started forward as if to test his power over his lower limbs, and opened his mouth to its utmost capacity.

"It's the Devil hisself!" shouted Peter, brandishing his arms, and lifting his feet one after the other—"The rale Devil, and no mistake."

He hurried to the door; it was locked; the panels were one solid piece of time-hardened oak, and apparently impenetrable.

Peter was a prisoner in the Preacher's study.

At the same moment, separated from him by thick walls, and panels of rivetted metal, Charles was dying in the Iron Room, while Caleb and Lemuel stood by its narrow door.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIFTH.

MAGIC EXPLAINED.

You ask the secret of the Preacher's power over the giant frame of the hardy Peter?

Was it magic, wizard-craft, or animal magnetism? It was none of these. Magic demands incantations, wizard-craft must work by spells, and animal magnetism can only act when it is favored by a compliant Will. Magnetism thoroughly destroys, for the time, all consciousness through the senses. It is the operation of one Will over another, and can never be accomplished in its important phases, unless the *subject* yields his will captive to the will of the operator.

Yet here in the case of Peter, we have a strong man, in the full possession of his everyday faculties, stricken suddenly into a paralysis of speech and motion, while his Will, more powerful even than the Will of the Preacher, resists with all its force.

How shall I explain this?

Let us suppose for the moment, that the

substance or element called *electricity*, is the agent by which Mind acts upon Matter, or to speak more plainly, the instrument by which the Brain commands the motion of the Arm and Tongue. Comprehend this in all its phases, and then admit a second supposition. Suppose that you can control the *electricity* of another person — control it against that person's will — by touching a certain nerve in the hand, the finger, or the arm? This control once obtained, accompanied at the same time by an impression upon the subject's mind does it not follow that all his powers of muscular motion, are, for the time, made prisoner to your pleasure?

Thus, the Preacher, inferior in strength and will to our friend Peter, obtained the mastery over his muscular powers, against his will, by controlling the *electric force* of his organization.

Advance a step farther. Admit that the senses do not reside in the tongue, the eye, the ear, the hand, and the nostrils, but in the brain. That brain can only act by *electric force*. Make an *impression* then upon the *electricity* of the brain, and it follows that the subject will see, taste, smell, touch, hear and feel, at your pleasure.

These suppositions, which recent discoveries have established as facts, fully explain all the wonders of magic and witchcraft.

We have seen, more than one incredulous person who laughed with all his soul at the very mention of these discoveries in science, suddenly confounded into involuntary belief. The unbeliever has been made to taste, hear, see, smell, and feel in accordance to the will of another person. Thus a glass of water, has been changed into acid, into wine, into honey — changed not in reality, but to the taste — by an *impression* produced by the operator upon the *electric force* of the subject's brain. We have seen with our eyes, and experienced in our own person, wonders that far exceed the most improbable legends of magic — wonders that appear miraculous and yet cease to be wonders at all, when the secret of their operation is explained by a reference to the unchangeable laws of Nature.

Our limits will not permit a complete discussion of the science. But hundreds of persons in Philadelphia and New York, persons of all shades of disposition, temperament and intellect, can testify to the performance of ex-

periments, in their presence and upon them personally, which mock the powers of belief and leave the exploits of olden time sorcery, far in the distance. And unlike the history of ancient magic, the cause of these experiments is not made a mystery, nor surrounded with all the display of scenic effect, and theatrical pomp. The *cause* is known to the persons who witnessed the experiments; and the cause, which we but crudely describe is as simple and as scientific in its explanation as the operations of the law of gravity.

The *fact* that a man like the Preacher, exercised such control upon the physical powers of a giant like Peter, was known to us long before we became acquainted with the *cause*. Indeed such facts are scattered copiously over the history of all ages. That the Preacher abused the knowledge of the great Truth, is no more an argument against its reality and its benefits to mankind, than his abuse of the Gospel, to purposes the basest, is an argument against the truth and benefits of Revelation.

In our history, a knowledge of the great Facts of Electricity, and its Connection with the Brain, is used by a bad man for the accomplishment of a bad end.

But this knowledge, properly developed, is capable of the greatest benefit to the human family. By it may be cured, or at least alleviated, one half of the diseases which afflict the human organization. Through its influence, all those diseases, especially, which spring from the Mind, and from the operation of Mind upon Matter, may be swept from the history of human suffering.*

Not the least important of its benefits, is the fact, that it rears a platform on which Reason and Faith may meet in concord. It crushes scepticism, and not by calling infidel! — but by unrolling the curtain which has for ages concealed those simple and awful Laws by which God governs the Universe — not the Universe

* The knowledge of this great science, has lately been developed, in a series of lectures, delivered in New York and Philadelphia, by Dr. John Bovee Dods and the Rev. Theophilus Fiske. In these lectures the science was termed — "Psychological Electricity." Thousands of the first citizens of New York and Philadelphia can attest, from their own observation and experience, the apparently miraculous character of these experiments.

of worlds alone, but also the Universe of Immortal Souls.

In the Dark Ages, men of learning were doubtless familiar with these great truths. But they were forced by fear of priestly faggot or mob outrage, to cloak them in a veil of scenic mystery.

So, in the Dark Ages, Priests of the Church either from fear of man or want of faith in God, cloaked under a drapery of cumbrous mystery the great facts of Religion: *That all men are brothers, and God is the Father of all. To do good to men, is to truly worship God. The brotherhood of mankind and the all-paternal character of God, are the vital truths, hidden under all forms of Religion.*

And then Priests and Learned Men, instead of making Faith and Reason, and Science and Religion meet in concord, took isolated paths, and cursed the world with a barbarous Faith and a mountebank Philosophy.

But the day comes, when the heart of the child and the brain of the learned man, will arrive by different paths, at the same great centre: when Reason will be married to Faith: and both Faith and Reason terminate their pilgrimage at the altar of God.

Every step in scientific discovery, is also a step gained towards this altar.

Two great truths we should gird forever to our hearts:

— The Scientific man, whose researches in science do not confirm and enlarge the belief in God and Immortality, is a false Philosopher, who gropes his way every hour far and farther from the throne of God.

— The Priest, whose faith does not teach him that God as the Father of all mankind, wishes and will accomplish the salvation of all, is a false Prophet, also groping his way from darkness unto deeper darkness.

The false Priest and the false Philosopher, are twin-blasphemers.

Their Faith and Reason are alike corrupt. Their teachings are a mockery of Humanity and a denial of God.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIXTH.

PETER, FANNY, AND THE PREACHER.

"Peter, Peter! You've got yerself into a scrape," was the remark of the giant as he

tried the door: "Preacher and gal both gone, and here you air."

Peter flung himself against the door, kicked its panels with all his might, and wrenched the knob until the sinews started like whip-cords on his iron wrist.

All his efforts however were fruitless. Ten minutes elapsed while he was occupied in this manner.

"What's become of Charley? If he should happen to meet the Preacher a-goin' down stairs! The reptyle! If I only had a club I'd send them panels into splinters in a minnit. Hello! I've an idea. You're stupid Peter, not to think of it afore."

Drawing a pistol from his pocket, he levelled it deliberately at the lock of the door. His hand was on the trigger, when the key turned in the lock again and the door sprung open.

At the same instant the room was filled by a thick cloud of suffocating smoke, which blinded the sight of the giant and forced him to pant for breath.

"Save yourself! Save yourself!" cried a voice—"The house is on fire."

Through the cloud Peter beheld the form of the Preacher, with the young girl lying pale and insensible upon his breast.

And from the entry, through the opened doorway the smoke continued to roll, in a thick and stifling cloud. The light was suddenly darkened: that dense mass of smoke, illumined by a lurid and hazy light, wrapped the giant, the girl, and the Preacher, in its folds.

"To the window," cried Peter, stumbling forward, "Let's have a breath o' fresh air."

"The windows are nailed shut," he heard the voice of the Preacher in reply: "Our only hope of escape is——" his voice was broken, as if in the effort to get breath—"is by the roof."

Plunging about in the darkness, Peter encountered the door-way, and with a sudden bound, endeavoured to pass from the threshold to the head of the stairs. But the smoke drove him back. He was blinded and stifled by the dense cloud. Struggling through its folds, he once more found himself in the room, and his extended hand encountered the hand of the Preacher.

"You cuss you, don't you know that you'll

kill that gal, unless you git the winder open?" he muttered, as he gave the Preacher's hand a wrench, which made him howl with pain—"Wait a minnit! I'll burst the winder open if I have to ram yer head through the sash!"

He plunged forward through the gloom, and fell over the Preacher's trunk, at the same moment crushing the lamp with his outstretched hand.

"Here we air," he cried, and raising the trunk with both arms, dashed it at random through the darkness. It chanced to encounter the window, and a sound of crashing glass announced that his effort was in part successful.

"I am dying," moaned a faint voice, which Peter scarcely recognized for the voice of the Preacher—"For God's sake, help! help! help!"

Peter felt the shutters, in the darknes. Felt the bolts and bars, which held them close and fast. Again he raised the trunk and hurled it forward, with all the strength of his arms. The shutters started—another blow—they flew open—and Peter starting forward, thrust his head from the window, and at the same instant caught a glimpse of the day-break sky, and inhaled one deep breath of pure air.

A strange sight it was to see his red face peeping from the window amid a cloud of thick and inky smoke.

At a glance, Peter surveyed the street beneath, and as he looked he saw the burly form of Stewel Pydgeon passing down the marble steps, in the act of emerging from the house, while Stewel's hoarse voice awoke the echoes of the night, with "*Fi-er! Fi-er! Fi-er!*"

But no time was to be lost. Peter turned from the window, and dragged the Preacher from the darkness to the fresh air. In the Preacher's arms lay Fanny, pale and beautiful in her fantastic attire, her face resting on his breast, while her hair streamed over his arms.

"Don't kill me—don't—" muttered the Preacher, as in a half swooning state he projected his face from the open window—"I really didn't mean to hurt your feelings."

"You're a purty magician, you are," gruffly responded Peter. "You can turn a live man into a corpse, but you can't put out a house, when it's a-fire. But let's have a-hold o' th' gal—don't you see she's dyin'?"

Lifting the unconscious girl from the arms of the Preacher, Peter grasped her firmly in his stalwart hands, and held her face toward the pure air, while the smoke streamed in a thick cloud, through the aperture of the window.

The Preacher meanwhile moaned pitifully—"Why don't they fetch the engines? Don't they know that we'll be burned alive?"

"How'd the house get a-fire?" growled Peter, still endeavoring to recover the unconscious girl.

"Went down stairs—into second story—was about to light a lamp—smelt fire—opened the door, and was stifled by the smoke—got up stairs with the girl, and managed to find the door of this room."

The Preacher spoke with difficulty, his language vague and almost incoherent, while projecting his neck to its utmost capability, he rested his hands upon the window frame, and endeavored to inhale one long deep breath of fresh air.

"Could somebody have turned on the gas and set it a-fire?" muttered Peter, as he shook the form of the girl, in the effort to restore her to consciousness: "But I guess it's been burnin' down stairs, this hour and more, for I smelt smoke when I first came in."

The wind without, blowing fresh and strong, for a moment drove back the smoke into the house. Our friends by the window experienced a sudden relief, and Peter with great satisfaction saw Fanny unclothe her dark eyes, as he grasped her in his arms.

"Why don't the engines come?" groaned the Preacher, as he turned his face, pale and distracted with affright, toward the giant. "Hark! D'ye hear that? The State House Bell! And that! God bless us, the engines are coming!"

His voice fairly shrieked with the violence of his joy. And at this moment, while Fanny gazed around with a vacant glance, there came a sound from the depths of the mansion, which penetrated the Preacher's heart, like the echo of his death-knell.

It was the low, deep roaring sound of a vast body of flame, shut up within thick walls.

"The house is burnin' away beneath us," exclaimed Peter.

"What is the matter? Where are we?"

whispered Fanny, as she turned her gaze from the frightened visage of the Preacher, to the bluff, but imperturbable face of the giant.

"We are perfectly safe my dear. Just stick your head out o' the winder, and get as many mouth-fulls o' the fresh air as possible."

"They are coming, they are coming!" shouted the Preacher, as the street below, was suddenly illumined with a red glare of torch-light, while the air echoed merrily with the sound of the engine bells. "Don't you see them? They are fixing the hose to the fire-plugs—there! there!"

The street echoed to the tramp of busy feet. Crowds of men, half clad, hurried to and fro, by the torch-light glare. The brass ornaments of an engine, flashed back the light, as it was hurled along, by the impulse of an hundred manly arms. The street so lately still as the grave, was now all light, confusion and uproar.

"Quick! Quick!" shouted the Preacher, as he stretched forth his arms from the window: "Don't you see that we're burnin' to death: Hall-oo! Murder!"

"I see him!" cried Fanny, as far below among the busy crowd, she saw a half-naked form reddened by the torch-light: "It is Ralph!"

"Look here you cuss, is there anybody else in the house?" and Peter shook the Preacher roughly by the arm.

"Don't trouble me! All my books and papers, all my clothes will be turned into cinders! Why don't they bring a ladder? Hall-oo!"

But Peter was not thus to be denied. Clenching the Preacher with his vice-like grasp, he repeated his question, with a slight addition in the way of rhetoric:

"Anybody else in this house? Give us an answer, or out you go from this winder, by——!"

"There's a man in the entry," gasped the Preacher: "I stumbled over him as I came along."

"Take the gal, you cowardly vagabon'," cried Peter, and ere the Preacher could manifest his astonishment by an ejaculation, the giant had disappeared.

He had plunged once more into the cloud of smoke.

Our history now returns to Brother Caleb and the Converted Monk. They stood at the door of the Iron Room, at least fifteen minutes before the Preacher was driven back to his "Study," by the fire and smoke.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVENTH.

BROTHER CALEB REACHES THE TOP OF THE STAIRWAY.

Brother Caleb, holding the light above his head, turned slowly round, and gazed upon Lemuel with his cold fixed eyeballs.

That gaze penetrated Lemuel with the very extremity of fright and terror. The luxurious folds of the dressing gown, which clothed Brother Caleb's gaunt form, only increased by contrast, the hideousness of his unearthly countenance.

"You can't scarce me, *Gatherwood*," whispers Lemuel through his set teeth, as his form trembles with the desperation of cowardice: "The time has gone by for that kind of thing."

"Another step, and I will reach the top of this cursed stairway!" murmurs Brother Caleb, still absorbed by the adventure of his dream.

His rigid face, motionless eyeballs, and slowly muttered words, suddenly strike the "Converted Monk" with an impression of the truth.

"A Somnambulist!" the thought only half escapes his lips. "Walks in his sleep, does he? I'll wake him up, when I have the proofs of his guilt in my hands. Go on, my dear *Gatherwood*!"

Bowing with much gravity, Lemuel uttered these closing words, with a grimace, accompanied by a burst of half suppressed laughter.

Brother Caleb, still asleep, was of course unconscious of his presence.

Turning, he touched the spring of the narrow door. It opened, and light in hand, he crossed the threshold, imagining that he had won another step on the stairway of his dream.

Lemuel stealthily creeping at his heels, followed him across the threshold, into the Room. And Lemuel, with all his soul absorbed in the contemplation of the movements of Brother Caleb, did not observe a prostrate form which was stretched upon the iron floor. His own

shadow added to the shadow of Brother Caleb, completely veiled the prostrate form from observation.

Nor did Lemuel, watching with an unchanging glance, the movements of Brother Caleb, behold the haggard face, which slowly uprose from the shadows, gazing around with a dull vacant gaze. It was the face of Charles Lester, who aroused from his deathlike stupor, by the current of fresh air, slowly raised his head, and beheld the motionless form of Brother Caleb, standing gaunt and erect, in the centre of the Iron Room. And near Brother Caleb, Charles beheld the slight figure of the "Converted Monk," crouching behind the gaunt form, like some noxious reptile, about to dart upon its unconscious prey.

Charles slowly rose to his feet. But half conscious, and impelled by an influence which it is in vain to analyze, he crossed the narrow space which separated him from the doorway.

Lemuel heard the sound of his step, and turned to him, suddenly whispering, "Go back, Stewel!" but ere his words were uttered, Charles had crossed the threshold, and closed the narrow door.

Lemuel still believing that it was Stewel's footstep that had disturbed his silent watch, turned again, and watched with flaming eyes the motions of his friend Gatherwood, otherwise known as Brother Caleb.

"No! No! You will not drive me back!" groaned Brother Caleb, in a tone of acute agony: "Do not hurl me from this dreadful height! Extend your hand—only for a moment—and I will be saved!"

Brother Caleb had attained the last step of that stairway, leading into the clouds, when there—upon the summit, amid white folds of waving mist—appeared the figure of Alice Bayne. There was a smile upon her beautiful face, and her golden hair waved freely to her uncovered shoulders. But even as Brother Caleb's foot touched the last step, the stairway began to rock with a frightful motion. He reached forth his arm, and attempted to clutch her hand, but that hand evaded his grasp, while the face of the beautiful woman was agitated by a look of calm mockery. Brother Caleb cast his eyes below—the awful height made him dizzy. Thousands and ten of thousands

of fathoms of space, lay between him and the solid earth. And Alice could save him—save him by the single extension of her hand—but Alice smiled in calm mockery, while she murmured in a calm musical voice, these words:

"Dr. Gatherwood, my home was happy before you passed its threshold! Give back my home, my husband, and my children, and then I will help you to ascend the stairway!"

And while the stairway rocked like a reed in the blast, Alice shook her golden hair, from the summit, and taunted the poor wretch with the history of his crimes.

—Such was the course of Brother Caleb's dream, as he stood in the centre of the Iron Room, with the keen eyes of Lemuel Gardiner fixed upon his rigid face.

"Alice! Thee must forgive me!" cried Brother Caleb, relapsing into the dialect of his youth: "Thee will not refuse to aid me! Mercy, Alice, mercy upon me, or I will fall—"

Brother Caleb strode madly forward, thinking that he was gaining the last step of the dream-stairway, and Brother Caleb pitched violently against the iron wall of the Iron Room.

With cold sweat upon his forehead, he awoke.

You may imagine his surprise, when the reality succeeded to his dream. The form of Alice, and the dizzy stairway had passed away. He found himself in the Iron Room, with the eyes of Lemuel Gardiner gazing into his own.

Lemuel, with his narrow figure contracted into the smallest possible compass, crouched in one corner of the closet, his head sunken on his breast, his chin resting on his hands, pressed nervously against each other. And thus Lemuel's eyes, looking upward from the shadow of his compressed brows, imparted a singular, almost ghostly character to his visage, covered by a close-fitting skull-cap.

And Lemuel did not move—not even for an instant change in the slightest degree, his statue-like position in the corner. Lemuel looked for all the world like some mischievous animal, of the lower order of the feline race, which, while in pursuit of its victim, has been suddenly confronted by a more aristocratic beast of greater capacity for carnage and destruction.

Very much like a cat, abruptly cornered by a tiger, looked Lemuel, the "Converted Monk."

"What does this all mean?" said Brother Caleb after a long pause. His projecting eyeballs began to lose their vague and glassy aspect. There was some trace of "Captain Bradburne of the Falcon" in their glance.

Lemuel preserved his fixed attitude, but did not reply.

"I have not seen you these three months," resumed Brother Caleb, holding the light above his head, while he took a more attentive survey of Lemuel's face: "Yes, it's three—possibly four months. What are you doing here, in my house? Is this a 'Christmas Play' to amuse the children?"

Brother Caleb smiled with his imperceptible lips; a sort of cadaverous smile, which only deepened the hollows of his cheeks, while it gave a sudden lustre to his eyes.

And Lemuel, crouching in the corner, saw the smile—felt it too, in every pore of his slender frame—and still had not a word in answer.

Brother Caleb was wrapped in thought. Placing the finger of his unoccupied hand, between his brows, he seemed earnestly engaged in an effort, to recollect distinctly, the events of the past four hours.

"I have been walking in my sleep," he exclaimed, "and have wandered from my bed to this room. The Iron Room! Eh! Where's Lester? Did you see anything of Lester?"

A miracle! Lemuel so glib in speech, when acting in the character of a "Converted Monk," is now silent as the President of a Broken Bank, when questioned concerning the causes of its failure.

"Who told *you* of this place?" cried Brother Caleb folding his blue gown about his spare limbs: "How came *you* into my house at this hour? How dared you, Sir, to follow me to the Iron Room?"

Then Lemuel speaking in a bland and whispering voice, as he joined his hands, while his face assumed a look of mock-gravity, uttered this simple exclamation:

"O, Reuben!"

Now Brother Caleb had not heard that name for many years.

Pronounced by his associate in the crimes of seventeen years ago, it struck harshly upon

his ear, and with the memory of his late dream still pressing heavily upon his brain, it sounded like an accent uttered by some mocking Demon, from the shadows of a dark and guilty Past.

The very audacity of this Lemuel—this despised dupe and tool of former years—penetrated Goodleigh with an impression of involuntary fear.

"You have set yourself upon my track. You have spied out the secret of this house. You have even discovered the secret of this room. Since the moment, now three months ago, when I scorned you in the street, and refused you the charity of a single dollar, you have dogged me, like—like—" he paused for a word—"like the common eaves-dropper and vulgar busy-body that you are. And now you have joined hands with this Lester—is it so?"

While Brother Caleb thus poured forth this torrent of incoherent reproach, "the Converted Monk" maintained his fixed position in the corner, as silent as the iron walls against which he leaned his crouching form.

"Is it so? You have some petty plot working in your craven brain? How much must I pay for your silence? You have made some discovery—eh? Have succeeded in identifying Caleb Goodleigh, with Captain Bradburne of the Falcon? Ho—ho! Lemuel, you grow amusing in your old days."

"This night," said Lemuel, speaking very low, his chin still resting on his clenched hands: "This night, I witnessed the death of Ann Clarke."

Goodleigh started—a convulsive motion of his features was perceptible—but in an instant he recovered his grim composure.

"Did you?" he blandly replied: "Said she anything of that child—the pledge of your early loves?"

Lemuel Gardiner was a despicable coward. All his life had been devoted to despicable and cowardly deeds. Through seventeen years of baseness, he had slided his way with a devotion to the smallest details of depravity, worthy of one of those vulgar fiends, which make you laugh and shudder, in the pages of some grotesque German story. But all his baseness, rich at first in money, had at last left him—poor—miserably poor. He was now, at the age of forty-seven—to a casual gazer he

seemed not more than thirty—a desolate and blasted man. VIRTUE he could not understand; it was one of the incomprehensible words in the Dictionary to him. But POVERTY was a word that conveyed an intelligible, a palpable idea to his dwarfed soul. Poverty sounded in his ears, as Leprosy sounded in the ears of the ancient Hebrews. And he was poor—poor after seventeen years of perjury, trick, and fraud—while Reuben Gatherwood, his old-time associate, stood before him in all the plenitude of Real Estate and Bank Deposits. He was poor; forced to get his bread by pandering a nightly stimulant to the appetite of bigotry, in the shape of “No-Popery Lectures,” to drag his weary way through the tortuous details of small hypocrisies, and pettier hatreds, while Reuben Gatherwood the Apostate Physician and blaspheming Slaver, was the Lord of half a million dollars.

Lemuel had been thinking of all this, for three long months. Churning it over, while he wandered dark streets, at dead of night, and digesting it in his very soul, as he threaded through the crowd of Chesnut street by day. And Lemuel had long resolved upon revenge. He did not hate Caleb because he was bad; only because he was the Rich Scoundrel. Resolved upon revenge, in what form he had not determined, Lemuel had spied out the secret of Goodleigh’s connection with the Falcon, or rather spied out a clue to the proof necessary for Goodleigh’s conviction, before a Court of Justice, for the identity of Goodleigh with Captain Bradburne had been known to Lemuel for many years.

This was the state of affairs with him, when Ralph summoned him from the Church of St. John—where he had wandered under the influence of some lingering trace of early belief—to the bedside of the dying woman. But his interview with Ann Clarke had altogether changed the current of his ideas. It had left upon him a shadow of overwhelming despair. Perchance his brain, long fitted for the reception of mental disease, had suddenly been seized with that most terrible form of insanity, known as Monomania. There is a monomania which makes the veriest coward brave. A purpose of revenge, nursed in the very core of the heart for weary days and nights—nursed in dreams and elaborated slowly in the hours of

waking hatred—may at last ripen into the two-fold idea of Suicide and Murder.

Did this two-fold idea impart to Lemuel Gardiner the courage to confront the man whom he feared; feared supremely, and from the depths of his coward nature?

Let us await the issue of the scene.

“Said she anything of your child—the pledge of your early loves?”

“Yes,” replied Lemuel, “and something of Alice Bayne, the victim of your cowardly outrage.”

“Do you know that I’ve a mind to strangle you?” Caleb’s voice was hoarse with suppressed rage. He advanced threateningly, but Lemuel still crouched motionless in the corner.

“Have you? Hush!” Lemuel’s voice sounded like the accent of a woman who endeavours to still a boisterous child: “Hush! Reuben! The Police Officers may hear you. They wait without.”

Brother Caleb recoiled, as though a blow from a strong man had stricken him in the chest.

“Have you dared?” he whispered, “Cur! Why I could beat your brains against these walls—beat out the miserable heart which rots in your living body—and leave you here, in this room, which in that case, should be your only coffin. Who would ever hear of your death? That door once closed, and your carcass would be shut up in darkness forever.”

Lemuel advanced from the corner. His lean shrunken figure dilated in its every fibre.

“The door *is* closed,” he said in a whisper, and with a singular smile.

Caleb turned on his heel, and at a glance, saw that the door of the Iron Room was indeed closed. Closed so tightly and effectually that it was not distinguishable from the iron walls.

And then Brother Caleb gave utterance to a frightful oath, for—he knew not the secret of the spring which opened the door from the inside.

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHTH.

THE INSIDE SPRING.

“When you bought the house, you were informed of the existence of the Iron Room,” said Lemuel, remarking the changed counte-

nance of Caleb with calm satisfaction: "The original owner built it with a particular object. He wished to secure his title deeds and his hoarded gold. Therefore — Reuben are you listening? He procured the services of a celebrated Locksmith. He had the door constructed in such a manner, that it opened and shut with a secret spring. The burglar might possibly discover the spring on the outside, but once within the Iron Room, it was impossible to discover either the door, or the spring which opened it from the *inside*. You have heard these facts before?"

Brother Caleb raised his hand to his forehead — it was wet with beaded moisture. The lamp quivered as he held it above his colorless face.

"You may remember that a burglar once stole into this Room, while the 'original proprietor' was absent from the city. He — the proprietor — was absent for two weeks. When he returned he visited this 'patent safety chest' and found the burglar's dead body, stretched among piles of mortgages, and heaps of boxes, filled with specie. Did you hear of it?"

Again he paused, but it was now Caleb's turn to be silent.

"*The secret of the 'inside spring' died with the former owner of the house,*" resumed Lemuel. "When you bought the property (Israel Bonus was the Conveyancer I believe?) you were duly informed of the '*outside spring*' but at the same time, told that the secret of the '*inside spring*' (excuse this repetition, Reuben) was lost forever. Do you remember?"

It seemed indeed as if the power of speech had passed from Caleb Goodleigh, as the sound of Lemuel's voice penetrated his ears. Frightfully pale, and shaking as with an ague-fit, he gazed toward the place where he supposed the door to be, with a vague yet earnest look.

"Lemuel," he whispered, after a long pause: "There is no need of any quarrel between us. Let us go down stairs, and settle our dispute over a bottle of wine. You know the secret of that door — eh?"

"When I came to your house to-night, it was in company with a Police Officer," resumed Lemuel: "It was then my purpose to procure proofs of your guilt, and have you

arrested in your bed. I left the Police Officer on the first floor, while I went through the apartments, in the wing of your mansion. I was absent from his side only a few moments, and when I came back, no change in my countenance belied the nature of my occupation, during this absence. He little dreamt, poor fellow! that I had torn your splendid carpet from the floor, and arrayed your furniture in a pyramid, and then set your Painted Chamber in a blaze!"

Goodleigh's face was agitated by a horrible distortion.

"By —! You are mad! You could not think of such an infernal deed!"

"No worse than setting fire to a ship filled with three hundred negroes, when a United States Frigate is in sight, and your boat under the stern. Eh, Goodleigh?"

"Come — you are raving!" said Brother Caleb, wiping the sweat from his forehead.

"I did this, not fifteen minutes ago, and then joining the police officer, came up stairs, in order to ascertain whether you were fast asleep.

Lemuel's eyes blazed in the sunken sockets, while his lips parted in a grimace — a grimace that was the very extravagance of mockery.

"This is a jest, Lemuel," said Caleb, gnashing his teeth — "a jest for which you will pay dearly —"

"For which *both of us* will pay dearly," interrupted the "Converted Monk" — "But as I reached the head of the stairs, I saw you emerge from your room. I followed you, and not until you reached the threshold of this closet, did I discover that you were walking in your sleep. Then the mere idea of burning your house, with the chance of burning its owner with it, was displaced by a much better thought —"

"A much better thought?" echoed Goodleigh, while the hand which held the lamp began to droop slowly from its raised position.

"I thought of the '*inside spring*' of the Iron Room. And from this thought arose a kindred idea, which I put to myself in the form of a question — 'What if Dr. Reuben Gatherwood should enter the Iron Room, enter it in *his* sleep, and only awake to find himself *shut up* in an Iron Coffin — an Iron Coffin enveloped in the flames of blazing rafters?' It was a fine question, Reuben — can you answer it?"

The speaker stretched forth his arms, in the very earnestness of his mockery, while his eyes, that seemed to burn in their sockets, assumed a wild and singular expression.

Brother Caleb at the same instant became conscious of two facts, which promised to have a decided influence upon the course of his life.

He was alone with a madman. It needed not his medical lore to tell him that. The eyes blazing in their sockets, the lips distorted by a grimace, and whitened by an almost imperceptible foam, the outstretched arms swaying vaguely in the air—conveyed a language which Brother Caleb could not misunderstand.

And this was only the first fact of which he became suddenly conscious.

Looking over his shoulder, Brother Caleb saw a slight cloud of smoke, issuing from the aperture near the ceiling.

"The house is in flames, and I am alone with a madman!" This was the thought which Brother Caleb deduced from the two important truths just mentioned.

Could he tame the madman by threats, by promises, or by the magnetic power of the eye? That strange power which the eye of a sane man, has over the mind of the Insane?

Brother Caleb was so Rich—so very, very Rich—and Lemuel Gardiner so Poor—so miserably Poor!

And Brother Caleb must die in an Iron Coffin, heated red hot by the flames of his burning mansion, die with a madman's yell in his ears, die a death such as had never befallen the leprous negro, in the infernal history of the Slave Trade!

There was no time to be lost. The thin line of smoke, issuing through the aperture, began to thicken rapidly into a cloud. This coffin-like room, whose atmosphere was close and oppressive at all times, began to grow uncomfortably warm. The air began to heat.

"Lem, my good fellow, the joke has been carried far enough," as he spoke, in a tone of good-fellowship, he raised the lamp, with a firmer hand, and surveyed the face of the "Converted Monk": "You know the secret of the inside spring. Open the door and let us be gone. Once outside and—"

"You will give me a dollar, for *char-i-ty's* sake—won't ye?" said Lemuel in a subdued

voice. "Hark! These walls are thick, but you can hear the State House bell. By this time Reuben, the *wing* of your big mansion is provided with a plumage of flames. Good figure that? Hark! Do you hear a sound, like the tread of a large crowd? Hundreds of people are in front of your doors, Reuben, but not one of them—not one among ten thousand—can release you from this room."

Caleb cast an uneasy glance toward the aperture. The cloud of smoke was increasing rapidly. The atmosphere of the Iron Room, grew warmer every moment. And a deep roaring sound, like the echo of a vast furnace, throbbed at intervals, upon the ear of the affrighted man.

"Let us go!" shrieked Caleb, now fairly wild with terror, as the big drops of moisture coursed down his hollow cheeks: "I swear to you that I will forget the past. You shall be rich, rich I say! I will divide my wealth—I swear it!"

"He talks of riches and of wealth, who in less than an hour, will be nothing but a heap of cindered bones!" said Lemuel in a low voice, as though communing with himself.

"Madman I defy you!" cried Brother Caleb, fixing his gaze, with sudden intensity upon the visage of Lemuel: "Why need I beseech, when with a look I can disarm your madness! My eye is upon you. You know it. You cannot move but at my bidding. Ha, ha, have I mastered you?"

Indeed Lemuel shrank from that fixed gaze, which was imbued with peculiar magnetic power. He shrank, and turned his body away, but his eyes he could not remove from Brother Caleb's face.

Was the mind of Goodleigh about to triumph over the will of the Madman?

Lemuel seemed to have become in a moment, the victim of an intolerable physical and mental agony. He trembled violently, and the foam grew thicker and whiter, over his lips. Turning his body from side to side, at pleasure, he could not remove his eyes from the burning fascination of Caleb's gaze.

"Come! Open that door—I command you!" exclaimed Brother Caleb, while his projecting eyeballs, emitted flames of magnetic light: "You are in my power. I command you."

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINTH.

"A LITTLE PRIVATE CONVERSATION."

LEMUEL began to move along the iron floor, slowly, almost imperceptibly, and without raising his feet. Not for an instant did he remove his gaze from Caleb's face. He was chained to Caleb's eyes, as by the power of an irresistible magnetism.

"To the door! Discover the secret spring! I command you!"

Brother Caleb dared not turn away his eyes from Lemuel's face. That steady gaze, one instant changed, and all was lost. But he felt the air was growing warmer every moment, and the smoke issuing from the aperture, now began to flow like a misty veil before his face.

Gliding, shuffling over the floor, Lemuel approached the wall, where it was supposed the secret door was concealed.

His features were terribly agitated; he was gathering all the force of his Will, in order to combat the fascination of Goodleigh's gaze. Halting abruptly, he flung his body backward, while his feet moved as if in opposition to his will. And as he struggled with that gaze, as a man would wrestle with an enemy, arm to arm and breast to breast, Brother Caleb drew nearer, until the lamp which he held came within the reach of Lemuel's uplifted arm.

The face of Caleb was bathed in moisture. His eyes flashed with a sinister, malignant lustre.

"You dare not disobey!" he said, and —

Lemuel's struggling arm, dashed the lamp from his hand. They were alone in the Iron Room, alone in the darkness, enveloped in the stifling atmosphere, as in a shroud of heat and smoke. The power of Caleb's gaze was gone; and a burst of mocking laughter which seemed to resound from the very heart of Lemuel, told Caleb that the hour of the madman's vengeance was at hand.

"Ha! Ha! This atmosphere grows comfortably warm. How do you like it Reuben?"

"Devil!" gasped Caleb through his grating teeth.

"You can hear the State House bell? Hark! to the sound of the firemen's tread as they are hurrying along the street. But they cannot save you Caleb. No! No! No-o-o!"

Caleb uttered a howl of despair and plunged in the direction of his enemy's voice, but Lemuel slid like a snake from his outstretched arms.

"When I stood upon the threshold, I thought to myself, that it would be better for me to obtain the proofs of your guilt before I had you arrested. But I changed my mind, Reuben, changed my mind—d'ye hear? I will not arrest you; I want no proofs of your guilt. I only want"—another burst of laughter—"the opportunity of a little private conversation with you."

"This place stifles me," groaned Caleb—"I can scarcely breathe. By Satan it is only a horrible nightmare. Lemuel! Lemuel! Relieve me from this place, and name your price. I am rich—rich"—

"And you must die the death of a leprous negro in a burning ship," whispered Lemuel in his ear.

"I have riches scattered over all the world. Release me, and I will share with you! You have heard of my plantation in the West Indies? A beautiful place that stretches from the sea-shore, adorned with everything that can please a man of pleasure. Beautiful slaves—they are mine—cellars filled all with old wine—a voluptuous atmosphere—days and nights of sensual pleasure. These—these I offer you as the price of my life! Quick, Lemuel, quick, I say! There is no time to be lost!"

"You grow poetical, Reuben," was the only reply that resounded from the darkness: "Strike a more practical vein. Somehow I like the sound of your voice."

"Do you desire money? Long condemned to poverty, you shall taste the enjoyment of money for money's sake. You shall become a Capitalist. You shall have the control of half my fortune. Think of it Lemuel! As a man of money, you can revenge the insults received in a lifetime of poverty, you can command"—

"The twenty thousand dollars of which you robbed me, at *rouge et noir* in the good city of Paris. Eh, Reuben?"

That roaring sound, which throbbed through the burning mansion, was now heard with appalling distinctness. Faster and thicker poured the smoke through the aperture in the iron

walls. The heat became intolerable. Caleb groaned in anguish: he heard the sound of bells and trampling feet, and shouting voices, all subdued and deadened by thick walls, and every sound penetrated his heart like his funeral knell.

"Will no one save me!" he shrieked—"Must I die in this cursed place?"

"I burn! I burn!" answered the voice of Lemuel—"These iron plates are heating. Reuben, Reuben I say"—

"You relent—you will discover the secret spring?"

There was silence, only interrupted by that dull, roaring sound.

Lemuel roused from his monomania by the near prospect of an appalling death, had indeed relented. The madness which had seized him, after his entrance into the iron room, now suddenly passed away. He started from his frenzy, like a man roused abruptly from a horrible dream.

"Search for the spring, Reuben," he cried in a changed voice—"Years ago, the secret of that spring was communicated to me by the lock-smith, on his death-bed. In his last hour, he repented that he had made the lock, for the death of the burglar weighed heavy on his soul"—

"The spring!" shrieked Caleb, "Where is it? Do you not feel that we are burning alive?"

"A small iron knob projects from the iron panel. It is about half-way between the ceiling and the floor."

In the darkness, they began to search for the iron knob. While the atmosphere grew more dense, Caleb and Lemuel placed their hands upon the iron panels, already warming under the influence of the fire, and with the eagerness of despair sought for the inside spring.

They passed around the narrow room, in opposite directions, and met again, their hands pressed upon the iron panel, touching in the darkness.

"I cannot find it," groaned Lemuel—"We shall be burned alive—"

"Dog! This is your work?" hissed Caleb through his set teeth: "You will share my fate. We shall die together. Ho, ho, friend Lemuel are you caught in your own trap—"

"But I am not rich," whispered Lemuel.

Goodleigh mad with rage, sprung toward him in the darkness. Lemuel avoided his grasp, and Goodleigh stumbled and fell upon the iron floor. A sensation of intolerable heat, pervaded his frame, as he came in contact with the heated panels.

"I would give ten years of my life, to have you in my grasp," he shrieked, as he staggered to his feet.

"You had better think of your misdeeds, Reuben," answered Lemuel—"Think of Ann Clarke who was innocent, until you crossed my path, and made her the Murderess of her own child"—

"And you, now that you are about to die, shut up in flames, you my good Lemuel, think of the Church whose rites you have blasphemed, whose vows you have broken. Think of that life of forty years, which is marked in its every moment, by the tricks of a craven and a swindler—"

"Think of Alice Bayne! You are silent—have I touched you? Ah, cowardly knave! Did not your heart fail you, when you stole into that peaceful home, and under the cloak of your profession, damned the purity of a mother, drove the father to suicide, and sent the children adrift upon the world? Did you ever feel remorse good Reuben?"

"I did not creep to the bed of a dying woman, and under the cloak of a Preacher's frock, extort from her fears a will that made her children beggars. Indeed I did not. That was reserved for a *Converted Monk*."

"But you robbed this Preacher of the inheritance of the children—robbed him at the gambling table—at the very moment, when he was about to return to America, and surrender his ill-gotten wealth. Do you remember *Frascati's*?"

"Is there no way of escape?" groaned Caleb in a changed voice. "Ah! This is a horrible death!"

He gasped for breath, and staggered over the floor, while his temples throbbed with an intolerable torture. The roaring sound grew more distinct. It drowned the tramp of the thousands who hurried along the street, and enveloped the iron room on every side.

Panting for breath, his lungs oppressed by the stifling air, the sinews of his throat with-

ing under a sense of suffocation, his brain fevered and his temples throbbing with acute agony, Brother Caleb felt that his consciousness was rapidly passing away, that he was sinking fast into that stupor which terminates only in Eternity.

He began to utter incoherent oaths and imprecations of despair, as he staggered over the heated floor.

"Alice! I defy you! You shall not drag me down! A ship in sight, did you say? Ho, ho, we'll foil them! Into the sea with our living cargo—overboard with them all! Wash the stain of blood from the decks, and let hand-cuff and manacle follow the negroes, into the sea. For the sea is silent—it tells no tales! How much did you say I was worth? Half a million? A great deal of money! Change it into gold, gold, d'ye hear? Let me see it all in gold. Let me bathe in it, let me swim in it, for with gold a man can move the world. Curses upon the knaves! This gold is heated—it withers the flesh from my fingers as I grasp it!"

Staggering to and fro, Brother Caleb at last, encountered the form of Lemuel.

Lemuel was on his knees, muttering as he gasped for breath, a prayer of the Catholic Church.

They grappled together, and fought in the darkness, Caleb endeavoring to dash the head of Lemuel against the heated wall, while Lemuel clinging to him, with maniac strength, sunk his teeth into Caleb's shoulder.

Their curses died half-uttered on their lips. Suffocating with the intolerable heat, they lost the power and coherence of audible speech.

It was a fearful struggle which they maintained in the darkness, in that Iron Room, enveloped in a whirlpool of flame.

CHAPTER THIRTIETH.

THE BRAVERY OF THE PREACHER.

Our narrative once more retraces its steps, and resumes the adventures of the other characters of this history.

"They're bringin' a ladder! Look! Look! They're bringin' a ladder! Don't you see 'em!"

Wild with fright, the Preacher bent from the window. Reaching forth his arms he surveyed

the thousand faces which were upraised in the glare of the blazing house.

Fanny by his side, in her gay attire, with her hands joined and her black hair floating over his shoulders, fixed her gaze upon a single form in the crowd, whom her eye singled out among a thousand.

Poor Ralph! While the engines worked by sturdy arms were playing upon the roof, while the smoke and flame rolling into the sky together, alternately illumined and darkened the scene, he stood on the edge of the pavement half naked and barefoot, with his eyes raised to the window in the third story.

He had secured a plug for the Fairy, and now leaving the Fairy Boys to work the engine, he leaned against a tree-box and made his voice heard above the clamor of the crowd:

"Durn my riffin! There's a gal up yander! A live gal! Why don't you fetch a ladder! And a man too! Moses!—how he shakes his neck and wriggles his hands!"

Presently a ladder was brought, and after much hoarse shouting and rugged motion, it was raised and placed against the window in the third story.

"Save the gal!" shouted twenty rough voices, and twenty fellows in scarlet shirts leaped to the ladder with one bound.

But Ralph was before them. No sooner had the top of the ladder touched the window sill than his naked feet were upon its rounds, and his hardy visage lifted upward, and reddened by the glare, gazed with its large grey eyes, upon the face of the woman far above, as he ascended with the agility of a monkey in search of cocoa-nuts.

"Go it Jonesey!" shouted a score of voices — "Save the gal or bust yer b'iler!"

Fanny gazing from the window beheld her brother's face as he rapidly ascended. Peter when he left the room, had closed the door—whether by design or accident we cannot tell—and for a while, the place was free from smoke, although the flames from the wing of the mansion, were every instant rolling nearer to the main building. She breathed freely, but the uproar, the sky reddened with flame, the echo of falling timber, and the shouts from the thronged street, filled her with a terror that can be readily imagined.

But Ralph was coming—he was half way

up the ladder—he would save her. Fanny uttered a loud shriek of joy.

The Preacher darting into the shadows, secured some articles which he took from his trunk within his white vest, and placed the MSS. of his life, entitled "*MEMOIRS OF A PREACHER*," in the pocket of his dressing gown. Darting to the light again, insane with terror and incapable of thinking of anything but the safety of his precious life, he began to creep from the window. His feet touched the rounds of the ladder. Turning his face, distorted by his panic, over his shoulder he began to descend.

"You are not going to leave me?" cried Fanny.

He did not seem to hear her; but a thousand eyes uplifted from the street, beheld this illustration of his gallantry and courage. Beheld the Preacher descending, while the face of the girl looked from the window.

But Ralph was rapidly ascending. In a moment after the Preacher left the window Ralph's hand encountered his right foot.

"Go back you cuss," he shouted, pinching the Preacher in the calf of his leg—"Into the winder agin, or I'll chuck you overboard."

"Don't! Don't!" cried Jervis—"Let me go. The house is on fire——"

"O' cou'se it is" answered Ralph, converting his head into a battering ram, and urging the Preacher upward again—"Keep movin' my superfine feller! My name's Jonesey and I al'ays goes in for burnin' a chap like you, into small pieces. Will you get into the winder or shall I chuck you over?"

The Preacher looked below—his fears increased the distance between himself and the pavement—he began to grow dizzy.

But Ralph, conscious that the eyes of the Fairy Boys were upon him, propelled the Preacher gently upward, by using his head as a battering ram, and the Preacher's delicate person as the object of attack. Comprehending this manoeuvre, you will not be surprised to learn, that the Preacher soon reached the window, and entered it again by a movement which would have gained him great applause in any respectable Circus. To be brief, he plunged head under heels into the window.

"Hello! What's this!" cried Ralph as he reached the top of the ladder and found himself face to face with his sister—"May I be turned into a Snapper if you don't look like *our* Fan!"

"It is Fan, yes it is Ralph," answered the girl flinging her arms about her brother's neck—"O, I am so glad you're come!"

"Don't doubt it! But what do you mean dressin' yerself like a play-actor?" cried Ralph gazing with big eyes at the changed attire of his sister—"Have you found any rich relations, an' did they set their house a-fire, for joy, at seein' you?"

But Fanny with a firm hand and courageous heart, had already ascended upon the window sill, and placed one foot upon the ladder. She was a brave girl. Her life of neglect and want had given her presence of mind and firmness of nerve.

"Go down, Ralph," she said, "when we are safe I'll tell you all. Go down—I can take care of myself—only do you keep my frock from blowing in the wind."

"You look like a rale super at the theater," cried Ralph, beginning his descent, as with one hand placed upon his sister's dress, he steadied her movements: "Don't look below, Fan, and we're safe!"

The wind lifted the masses of her dark hair, and the glare of the flame, showed her form, in distinct relief, as assisted by her vagabond brother, she slowly descended the ladder.

"Take kear Jonesey!" shouted a Fairy Boy from below.

And the spectators of the conflagration, held their breath with suspense, as they beheld the form of the girl, descending the ladder, her rich attire contrasted strongly with the ragged apparel of the outcast Ralph.

Fanny was half way down the ladder before the Preacher recovered from his acrobatic movement through the window. Gathering himself up again, he placed his hands upon the sill, and beheld the face of Fanny uplifted, with the reflection of the fire, giving a wilder beauty to every feature.

"I must not loose the girl," he murmured, and crawled out upon the window sill, when a strong arm, dragged him back again.

CHAPTER THIRTY-FIRST.

STEWEL HAS HOPES OF THE TIN BOX.

Peter stood before him, holding the form of an insensible man in his arms. Peter rushing from the smoke and flames of the entry, had closed the door again, and dragged his burden toward the window.

"It's Lester," faltered the Preacher, as he beheld the pallid face of the insensible man.

"To be sure it is, an' I found him thar in the smoke! An' when I found him he wanted to jump down the stairs into the fire, and so I had to knock him, jist to bring him to reason. Arter us is manners!"

Throwing the form of the insensible Lester over his shoulders, he emerged from the window, and began to descend the ladder.

"You are not going to leave me?" shrieked the Preacher, "I tell you I can't get down myself, I'm sick—I haven't strength. The fire has reached the entry—I'll be burned alive—"

"What's the odds!" shouted Peter, lifting his ruddy visage toward the affrighted man, who projected his head from the window—"If you can't use your hands an' feet you'll have to burn."

The Preacher, whose terrors, long agitated by glimpses of hope, now left him trembling and powerless, leaned against the window, his teeth chattering and his hands shaking as they grasped the sill.

"I can't get down, I tell you I c-a-n-t!" he shrieked.

Peter with his insensible burden on his shoulders, was now on a level with the second story.

At the same moment, Fanny and Ralph had reached the pavement, amid the cheers of the spectators.

"Wait a minnit and I'll come up for you!" cried Peter, "You deserve a good burnin' but I'll let that be postponed to a futur' occasion!"

"Quick! Quick! I hear the fire in the entry!" and as his voice was borne away by the wind, the spectators beheld his pallid face and outstretched arms.

For two or three minutes the wretched man endured all the tortures of a thousand deaths. He heard the roaring of the flame, as it swept from the wing to the main edifice of the man-

sion—he felt the heat which despite the open window, was fast becoming insupportable—and it seemed to his craven soul, that his heart as it knocked against his ribs, was only the sound of a death-watch, announcing his approaching hour.

"He's nearly down the ladder! Why don't he hurry? It's horrible—burned alive, burned alive and at my age! He means to leave me here—I know it, I know it! Curse me, why have not I strength to descend the ladder myself? Hah! He's down, he's down! He's giving Lester into the arms of those men, and there's the girl, too—all safe, all safe! And I'm up here, burning alive!"

The eyes of the wretched man fairly started from their sockets. Grasping the window, with both hands, he bent forward, and traversed the extent of the ladder with a madman's gaze.

"He's coming, he's coming?" screamed the Preacher, as he caught a glimpse of the scarlet coat—"Quick! Quick! If I once get out o' this I'll be a better man, indeed I will!"

Peter is indeed upon the ladder once more—Peter is ascending rapidly—and Peter reaches the window, at the same moment that the fire bursts from the roof above, in one vivid and dazzling sheet of flame.

"Come!" and the Preacher reached forth both arms.

Peter seized him, as though he had been a bundle of goods.

"Be quiet and don't kick or I'll drap you—" he whispered, as he slowly descended.

At this moment, the pipe of the Fairy directed towards the roof, poured in one steady column full upon the head of the Preacher. In an instant he was saturated from head to foot.

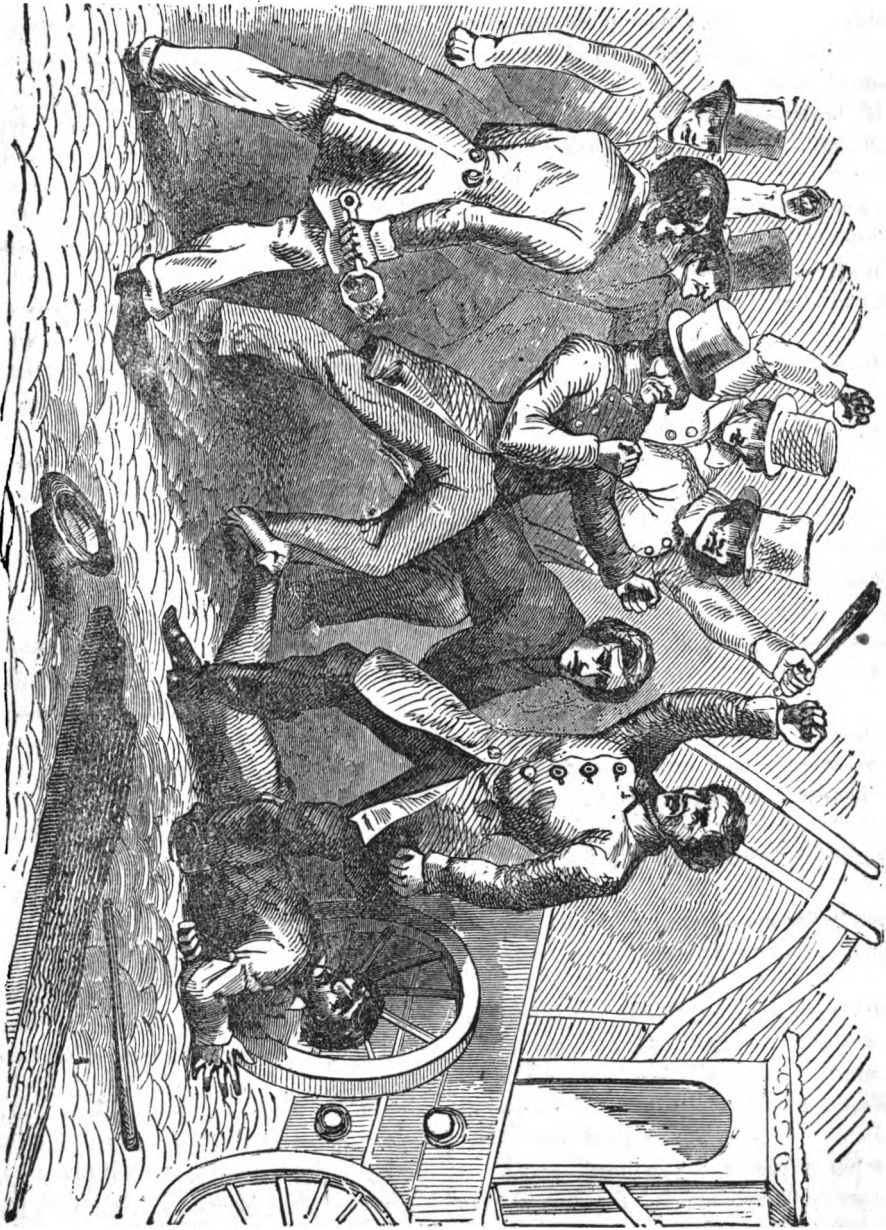
"Murder!" he shouted, scarce knowing what to make of this last calamity—"Fire!"

"Be quiet, can't you," whispered Peter, and as he spoke the flames rushed in a torrent from the third story window. "Look thar!"

Raising his dripping face, the Preacher beheld the sheeted mass, and was blinded even as he gazed, by a sudden cloud of smoke, which whirled along the front of this mansion, burying himself and Peter in its folds.

"Hold me tight," he gasped in agony—

"JUST STRIKE THIS MAN DEAD," HE CRIED, "AND YOU'LL FIND ME DEAD!"—PAGE 187.



"Don't let me drop! If I'm safe out o' this, I'll be a better man!"

"O, you will?" growled Peter—"I reckon so! Till you run off with somebody's wife or murder somebody's darter! Hey?"

In a few moments, half dead with affright, wet to the skin, and shivering in every nerve, the Preacher was placed upon his feet, at the foot of the ladder. The instant that his feet touched the ground, he seemed to recover his presence of mind. Gazing around the crowd, he beheld the ragged Ralph standing beside his sister, near the foot of the ladder, while Lester was in the arms of a stout citizen who was endeavoring to restore him to consciousness by dashing water into his face. And as he looked around, Fanny rushed eagerly toward him, holding Ralph by the hand, while the giant Peter turned to the insensible Lester, and assisted the stout citizen in the effort to restore him from his death-like swoon.

"This is Ralph—this is my brother," said Fanny.

A deep bass voice resounding from the very foot of the ladder, for a moment drew the attention of the spectators from the face of the beautiful girl.

"Gentlemen! This is a free country," said the deep bass voice, and the portly form of Stewel Pydgon was revealed by the torch light—"An' I don't hold it to be the correct thing, to let a man burn to death in a free country."

"Where's any body burnin' to death?" cried a Fireman, who was busy at a fire-plug which stood in front of the burning mansion—"Where is he? Say? Don't you see we're gettin' the fire under, old hoss? There's more chance o' yer friend bein' drowned than burnt by a long chalk."

"He's in that house, an' he's my friend," cried Stewel, in great excitement—"An' I've got a warrant for him in my pocket! I should like to know if the ends o' justice are to be evaded in this way? A man goin' and burnin' hisself to death when I've got a warrant in my pocket for him?"

Singular to relate, these words of Stewel, pronounced with much eloquence of gesture and an emphasis of the deepest bass, only elicited a roar of laughter from the surrounding crowd.

"I say Stewel, I'd get a *habe's corpus* on him," suggested the fireman at the plug—"That'll fetch him sure!"

But a new object of interest had attracted Stewel's gaze. He beheld the Preacher in his dressing gown, with Fanny on one side, and the half-naked Outcast on the other.

"Goodleigh's gone—but the tin box is sure!" cried Stewel, grasping Ralph by the collar. "Come along Jonesey—that tin box my dear!"

And Ralph who had been listening to the whispered words of the Preacher, started as if he had been aroused in the midst of a dream, and found himself in the hands of Stewel Pydgon.

"What has my brother done to you?" cried Fanny.

"Why do you seize the young man by the throat?" exclaimed the Preacher laying his hand on Stewel's arm.

"What's that your business? I say my buck you'll have to come along. The tin box is safe if Goodleigh has gone and burnt hisself to death."

He tightened his grasp upon the collar of the young man, and began to drag him roughly along the pavement.

Ralph at first thunderstricken by the apparition of Stewel, now regarded him steadily, surveying his rubicund face with flashing eyes.

"Jist let go a-me," he said—"Or I'll be apt to raise the Fairy on you."

As he said this, Lester stretched in the arms of Peter, at the foot of the tree-box, unclosed his eyes. He beheld with the first glance of consciousness, the face of Fanny and the visage of the Preacher. At the sight, the blood coursed through his veins once more. He sprang from the arms of Caleb and rushed toward the Preacher.

"Fairy boys to yer work, to yer work I say!"—cried Ralph, and Stewel under the influence of a clenched fist, which Ralph had planted between his eyes, fell back upon Lester, and Lester unprepared for this shock, fell once more into the arms of Peter.

"You're a fugitive from justice!" shouted Stewel, as soon as he recovered himself "Gentlemen I call upon you to assist me in arrestin' this desparate villain!"

He looked around for Ralph, but Ralph had disappeared.

"It is Jervis," whispered Lester as he released himself from the arms of Peter, "Jervis and the daughter of Alice Bayne."

Rushing by the portly form of Stewel, Lester looked eagerly around in search of the Preacher and the girl, but Jervis and Fanny had also disappeared.

Lester and Stewel formed the centre of a compact group, who regarded their movements with a burst of laughter.

"He shall not escape me!" shouted Lester, as the light streamed on his uncovered head and colorless visage, "I will pursue him to the end of the earth!"—

He attempted to force his way through the crowd, but the crowd presenting a compact front, forced him back upon the portly form of the Police Officer:

"This is an attempt to resist the Law!" shouted Stewel in a rage—"I know you gentlemen! I've got all your names! You may laugh, but to-morrow, Judge Choktaw 'ill hear o' this!"—

The crowd seemed to be impressed with the idea that Lester and Stewel were alike functionaries of the law, and therefore they resisted all their attempts to pursue the fugitives.

Peter came quietly to Lester's side—out at this moment, a scene took place, which entirely changed the surface of affairs.

CHAPTER THIRTY-SECOND.

A FIREMAN'S FIGHT.

"A fight! A fight!" resounded from the opposite side of the street, and in a moment the engines ceased to play, while the glare of the burning house revealed the faces of a dense crowd, tossed to and fro, in inextricable confusion.

It was a Fireman's fight.

Before we gaze upon the features of this exciting scene, let us lightly sketch a few prominent characteristics of the Philadelphia Fireman.

A mysterious character is the Fireman of the Quaker City. At the sound of the Bell, he starts from his slumber, and hurries forth but half clad, eager to battle with the flames,

and save the property of the rich man from destruction. He calls no hour of the twenty-four his own. He has no hearing but for the sound of the fire-bell. His only idea of motion is an engine or hose carriage, hurled along the streets, by the impulse of vigorous arms. Music to him is only found in the brass horn, through which the voice of the engineer rings in hoarse emphasis, exclaiming "Give way!" "Let her drive!" or "Wake up Snappers!" or "Here we are Hornets!" or some expression of similar eloquence and rough Saxon energy. Happy is the Fireman who "carries the horn!" The Horn is the climax of your incipient fireman's idea of glory. "To carry the Horn" in the thought of the Fireman, is as important and as glorious, as twenty-five per cent in good paper, is to the Third Street Broker.

The Engine or Hose Carriage is the centre of all the fireman's thoughts. He lives in the life of "the machine"—a new-fangled term lately introduced from New York, and not recognized by Orthodox Firemen. Her frontispiece, the amount of polish of which her brass is capable, the height which she plays, and the speed with which she runs—these are the only topics which occupy the attention of the true Fireman.

The soldier goes to battle in a gay uniform, and faces death for pay or for glory. The Fireman battles with flames, with falling rafters, with the chances of disease, and very often the certainty of an untimely death, and battles always without pay, very often without a word of thanks. His only glory is in action; he seems to be possessed with a monomania that forces him to devote time, health, strength—very often life—to the good of other people, who too often call him a ruffian and a blackguard, by way of recompense.

The Knights of old were divided into classes, ranks, and orders. So are the Modern Knights: the Firemen of the Quaker City.

There is the Fireman Dandy who sports white kids on Chestnut street, and yet is always ready to tear them off at the first tap of the State House Bell. This Fireman belongs to an aristocratic company, composed of staid citizens and gentlemen of the counting-house. They have a great supper once a year, and rather pride themselves upon their elegant

equipments, the long established name of their company, the respectable standing of their members, to say nothing of the neat little back room in their Engine House, where no cigar is smoked that does not breathe Havana in every puff.

Then there is the Fireman Hero who delights in the poetry of epithet, and always has a feud on hand, with some rival company. The very manner in which he dresses has something formidable to the unsuspecting. Hair very short behind the ears, and very long and shiny before them; hat with wide round rim, pitched significantly on one side of the head, and brought down very sharply upon one eyebrow; shirt of red flannel, adorned with a brooch of the size of a dollar, representing some event in the Fireman's life, or perchance the figure of a horn done in silver, or yet again merely the initials of his company's name.

Like the Knights of old, the Fireman Hero affects the poetry of epithet. True he does not call himself the Knight of the Burning Brand, or the Knight of the Silver Fountain, nor even the Knight of the Golden Horn. His titles have a vigorous old-fashioned Saxon significance. He is a Snapper, or a Hornet, or a Tartar—or in his more dangerous moods—a Fairy. A Fairy six feet high, in a white overcoat trimmed with horn buttons, and with corduroy pantaloons inserted into the tops of unpolished boots, would be something of a novelty to the minds of those ignorant persons, who have derived their ideas of Fairies, and Fairy life, from books. There are also the Rancheroes of the great Firemen army, who skulking on the outskirts of the camp, take to themselves such fearful names as Bouncers, Rats, Killers, Screw-Drivers and Blue Injins. These do not belong to the army of Firemen any more than the camp followers belong to an army of disciplined soldiers. They are the real *guerrilleros* of the Fire Department. Terrible are they with brick-bats on a Sunday afternoon: formidable are they, with paving stones, on a dark night, when the number of the enemy, is as one to twenty. Fearful are they in noises—noises of all kinds—very hoarse always—and sometimes very drunken. They practice the Indian war-whoop in their leisure hours. They prepare themselves for

the arduous work of battle, by a severe training around piles of brick, and heaps of paving stones. They are eloquent swearers. The number of times, when they confirm their statement, by invoking fierce condemnation, upon their eyes and livers, cannot be estimated by any known Arithmetic.

The true Firemen looks upon these Rancheroes with especial disfavour. As the Newfoundland Dog endures much from an ill-grained Cur, with defective eyes and scanty tail, so the real Firemen suffers much and suffers in silence, from the annoyances of the Ranchero. But as the Newfoundland dog sometimes drops his senerity, and seizes the cur by the neck, and shakes him at first gently, and then with justifiable violence, so the real Firemen, at times, is tempted to tap the Ranchero with his closed hand, and even to adorn the Ranchero's eyes with touches of a rich mezzotinto shadow.

To do the real Firemen the most scanty justice, we must record the fact, that he does more work for less pay, braves death oftener for less glory, than any other member of the community. Your shrewd money-making citizen, who never does a favor without a direct return in the shape of coin, looks upon the Fireman with an overflowing fullness of contempt. Very often he rewards the Fireman by insinuating in conversation or in the papers, that he only extinguishes flames which he himself has created. He rewards the Fireman for his thankless sacrifice of self by calling him an Incendiary. A just man and a grateful, is your sagacious citizen.

Battles have often been described, that is battles fought with cannon and bayonet, but what pen shall dare attempt the description of a Fireman's Fight?

The time midnight, or very often the small hours, near the break of day. The combatants some six hundred men, blocked up amid a mass of spectators, whose faces are reddened by the light of a blazing house. The weapons, fists, horns, spanners, bricks, clubs, and paving stones. The cause—a hose has been discourteously trodden upon, or a plug has been taken away, or a Snapper in the heat of debate has spoken irreverently of a Hornet. Then the war-cry resounds along the crowded street. Then, over dripping paving stones, and around glittering engines, and along side-

walks slippery with mire, swells the tide of war. You see a mass of heads, arms, fists, horns, feet and bodies, wind into a knot, and unwind again, to the sound of "Go it Snappers!" and "Ha-a! Ha-a! Tartars!" The air, by turns, darkened with cinders and red with the glare of blazing roofs, grows thick with brick-bats and paving stones, all on the wing, and doing fierce work, on eyes and crowns. The wounded fall, only to rise in more savage wrath. The fight grows miscellaneous: anybody can procure a broken head, without the least trouble. All along the curb-stones, droop weary warriors with bended heads and bleeding noses. The uninitiated who desire a definite idea of a scene like this, have only to remember that fine old Legend of the Cats of Kilkenny, or to imagine the Halls of Congress on the last night of the session. A faint idea may be obtained in this way.

A battle like this, was now in progress, in front of the burning mansion. How this fight originated, after a careful search into the most recondite branches of history, we are unable distinctly to relate. But certain it is, that just as the fire was beginning to yield to the combined attacks of half a dozen engines, in front of the mansion, and four in the rear, that the war-cry rose, and the combat began. In a moment hose and engine pipes were dropped. The crowd began to roll and toss, in a huge wave of heads and arms. Little knots of firemen were fighting along the curbstone, while in the centre of the street, swelled the concentrated fury of the war. Then through the uproar might be heard the war-shouts of the rival clans. Wake her up Snappers! was answered by Hey! Hornets! hey! Go it Fairies! was mingled with Now's your time Tartars! and Let 'em have it Injins! was greeted by the stern response, To your duty Rats!

Horns were freely used. Brick-bats began to hurtle through the stormy air. Along the extent of an entire square, rolled the tide of battle, mingling the combatants and spectators, into one inextricable mass of heads and fists, over which distinctly rose the figures of the engines, glittering in the flame, like islands in a stormy sea.

Stewel Pydgeon, Charles Lester and the giant Peter, collected in a group, in front of

the burning house, surveyed the field of battle, with various emotions.

"Gen'lemen respect the law," cried Stewel in a voice of thunder—but alas! a blow from some unknown fist, which shot suddenly around the corner of the tree-box, brought Stewel to his knees. And a second blow, administered freely on the back of the neck, made Stewel kiss the bricks. Thus was the Law, brought to shame, in the person of one of its most respectable Ministers.

Peter, in his red coat, surveyed the scene, not precisely with eyes like saucers, but with eyes very large, and very full of vague astonishment.

"What air they fightin' about? How they rap one another! They're they go! Why don't they stand up two by two and fight it out like men, instead o' mixin' 'emselves up like a basket o' black cats?"

"Come—let us make our way through the crowd," cried Lester seizing Peter's arm: "The Preacher disappeared in this direction. Come, I say. Unless we pursue him now, he will escape us altogether."

Peter did not remark the pallid cheek and flashing eye of his young friend.

Peter, gazing into the centre of the combat, beheld a solitary man, fighting alone, against a crowd of twenty. Dressed in a red shirt, with the blood flowing freely from his battered face, this lonely warrior, was attempting to defend his engine, from the assault of twenty foes. His brothers in arms were fighting in another part of the contest. By the chance of war, he was left alone, near the Engine of his company, which the twenty had resolved to deface if not destroy. But he kept up the fight right heartily.

"Tell yer I'm one of de Fairy boys," he shouted as he fought through his foes—"Yer don't smash dis engine. No yer don't. I keeps a graveyard of my own, jist to bury my dead. I keeps two Coroners and a depitty busy all the year round. Go it Fairy! You never know'd I was brought up to the business—did yer?"

Tossing into the crowd of his enemies, the Fairy distributed his blows with a high-toned impartiality, that soon littered the paving stones, with wounded and bleeding warriors. Five of the enemy measured their length upon the

ground. But others rallied. Adding new fire to their fury, by frequent shouts, they rushed upon the solitary Fairy, and bore him upon his knees. He, fighting as he fell, continued to converse with his tongue and fists.

"I'm a Fairy—I am!" he shouted gallantly as a hail-storm of fists, descended upon his unprotected head.

At this crisis Peter beheld the scene. And Peter, with a bound reached the centre of the fray, and interposed his giant form, arrayed in the scarlet overcoat, between the Fairy and his ensanguined foes.

"You mus'nt crowd. It ain't perlit. Besides I never like to see twenty wolves upon one dog."

CHAPTER THIRTY-THIRD.

PETER BECOMES A FAIRY.

With these words expressed without the least appearance of heat, Peter raised his right arm, and showed his right hand, high over the heads of the combatants.

"Jist strike this man agin," he cried, "and you'll find me *thar*!"

Surprised for a moment by this apparition, the combatants presently recovered their presence of mind.

"Go way old man, this is a private fight—"

"Sarve him out! Give a horn over his top-knot—"

"Hey! Hey! Down with him, down with 'em both—"

"He's a Fairy—let him have it—"

And accordingly one of the combatants, struck Peter in the breast, just as the solitary Fairy, protected for a moment by his intervention, was rising from his knees.

'Come, children you better go home and let your mammies spank you and put you to bed."

With these paternal remarks, Peter described a circle with his right hand, followed by a circle with his left, at the same time projecting his right foot with sudden and rapid force.

"Lord! how the old hoss mows 'em down!" ejaculated the admiring Fairy.

It was indeed true. Peter in sober verity had "mowed 'em down." He went through them, with great composure, using his hands

and feet at the same instant, and littering the ground with the forms of the Fairy's enemies. Two alone resisted his progress, making desperate battle, over the heaps of their wounded comrades, but Peter seized them by the neck, and knocked their heads together, until they dropt like ripe apples to the ground.

"Where did you larn it, hoss?" cried the admiring Fairy, seizing Peter's hand—"Jist larn me how to mow—do."

But there was not much time for conversation. The battle which had been raging in the middle of the street, now rolled toward the sidewalk, and entangled Peter and "the Fairy boy" in its vortex. Fifty other Fairies were battling with as many of Crocodiles. They fought around the Engine, and Peter much against his will, was forced to strike right and left, in order to save himself from being trampled under foot. Soon the Rats, the Bouncers, the Blue Injins, and the Snappers, joined the fray, and the Hornets came hurrying to the ranks of war. It was no longer a fight of feuds, a war of clans, but a promiscuous battle, in which every one struck his neighbor without regard "to party or creed." Peter mingled in the broil, and fought like a buffalo at bay.

Charles Lester, gazing from the sidewalk beheld the scene, as an hundred faces streaming blood were illuminated by the glare of the burning house. Soon he lost sight of Peter. He then made his way as best he might in the direction taken by the Preacher and the girl.

The day was breaking, and the fight was raging, when a sound like the thunder of an hundred cannon, drowned the yells of the combatants, and made every one start, as though a magazine of gunpowder had exploded near his feet.

The cause of this sound merits an explanation.

While the fight was in progress, the fire, which had been slowly yielding to the force of the engines, blazed up with increased vigor. One by one, the windows of the mansion, from the second story to the roof gave out a torrent of flame. The roof itself was one mass of fire—fire that shot up into the canopy of smoke in long and tremulous flames. The western wing of the mansion was on fire from

foundation to roof, and the wind swept the flames to the main building with the force and thunder of a tropical hurricane.

Far over the city flashed the light of the burning mansion, far over the wilderness of roofs and the waters of the Delaware, spread that vast volume of smoke, reddened in every fold, until it resembled an immense pall tinged with blood.

And the State House Bell never ceased to strike. Toll, toll, toll—it rung as though it was pealing a funeral knell.

The battle in the street, and the flames of Brother Caleb's house, raged together. The startled denizens of Drab Row, alarmed for their safety, were projecting their heads from every window, and from the houses immediately adjoining Goodleigh's, crowds of half clad men and women, and heaps of costly furniture, began to stream in an unceasing torrent.

And the fire burning fiercely on, had long enveloped the Iron Room in a shroud of flame.

At last the timbers beneath the Iron Room gave way, and the huge mass plunged with a horrible crash into the depths of the fiery whirlpool. As it fell, crashing from floor to floor, the fire was suddenly darkened. A volume of inky smoke rose from the depths of the mansion, and then the sky was strown with countless sparks, glittering through the darkness like a meteoric shower.

It was the fall of the Iron Room, which had produced the sound resembling the combined thunder of an hundred cannon. It was the darkness which followed this awful sound, that brought the combatants to a pause, and sent a thrill through the nerves of a thousand infuriated men.

The Iron Room had fallen.

Where now is Goodleigh and the Converted Monk?

The darkness did not last long. The flames rushed once more into the sky, as though the fall of the Iron Room had only deadened their fury for a moment. The street was once more bright as noonday. It was no longer Goodleigh's house that was threatened, but the mansions of the entire square.

A voice was heard through the death-like stillness, which had descended upon the crowded street.

Giant Peter mounted upon the "Fairy" engine, with the marks of the late combat on his face, seized a trumpet and made himself heard along the entire square:

"Put out the fire, boys," he shouted, "An' let's fight arterwards."

The suggestion was received with cheers. In a moment engines and firemen were at their work again. Separate columns of water were playing upon the roofs of Drab Row. Mounting to the roofs, nine sturdy firemen, with hose pipes in their hands, poured as many torrents into the abyss of Goodleigh's house. Snappers, Hornets, Crocodiles, Bouncers, Blue Injins and Tartars, buried their feuds for awhile, and with all might of fire-plugs and engines, went to work sturdily to accomplish the salvation of Drab Row.

And Peter, high on the Fairy Engine, was working with the Fairies, his giant form rising and bending, as he continued to encourage them with the oft-repeated remark—

"Put out the fire boys, an' arterwards we can lick one another like blazes"

When the sun arose, Drab Row was saved. But Goodleigh's house was a mass of blackened ruins. The walls alone remained, begrimed with smoke and dripping with water. Floors, windows, doors, everything but the brick walls had been consumed by the flames.

And buried beneath masses of smouldering timber, the Iron Room, rested in the depths of the cellar, its panels still joined together, but heated red hot by the surrounding fire.

Descending from the "Fairy" as the sun shone over his scarred and blackened face, Peter cast his eyes over the crowd, who thronged the sidewalk, blackened with cinders, and piled with heaps of damaged and broken furniture:

"Where's Lester?" he ejaculated aloud.

"Where's Goodleigh?" cried a stout gentleman near his side: "That's the question."

It was Stewel Pydgeon, who stood on the curbstone, gazing toward the walls of the house, whose desolate windows, still gave passage to clouds of inky smoke.

"What do I know of Goodleigh?" answered Peter, surveying the Police officer, with a vague stare.

“Don’t be affronted Sir,” replied Stewel with a saddened air — “I had a warrant for him, but he’s gone and burnt himself to death, in that cussed house. That’s all. But I have some feelin’s and a thing like this never happened to me afore.”

It was not until the close of the day, that the fire which smouldered in the depths of the ruined mansion, yielded to the combined force of a half a dozen engines.

Stewel, anxious to discover some trace of Goodleigh, hovered all day, near the blackened walls. More than once he determined to descend into the cellar, and search among the smouldering timbers for the body of Goodleigh. Of course no idea of Goodleigh’s wealth buried in the ruins ever entered Stewel’s brain.

CHAPTER THIRTY-FOURTH.

“A BLUE PARTY.”

Peter sought for Lester, and found him in his room, No. 92 of the ——— Hotel. Stretched upon his bed, he raved with a madman’s look and voice, about the Preacher, the daughter of Alice Bayne, and his dead sister—Ellen Lester.

For two weeks Peter watched by his bedside. Everyday came the Millerite Preacher, eager to watch and pray with the sick man. Charles at length began to recover from the delirium and fever. Very pale and weak, he besought William Marvin to watch by his bed, while Peter hurried forth to gain some intelligence of the Preacher. Peter searched the city through, tried every means within the reach of mortal man, yet still no word of the Preacher reached his ears. He had disappeared. He had not been seen since the night of the fire. Had the daughter of Alice Bayne, gone with him? Was she in his “charge?”

The second day after the fire there was a funeral in Bonus Court. A rude hearse, containing a pine coffin, moved slowly through the city, followed by the Millerite Preacher and his daughter. It paused on a bleak common, near the Eastern Penitentiary, and in

front of an unpainted fence, which separated a space of barren earth some two acres in extent, from the surrounding waste.

The hearse passed through a gate, and entered the space surrounded by the rough fence, and halted again beside a new made grave. Then William Marvin and the driver lifted the pine coffin and lowered it into the grave. The driver shoveled the earth upon it, while the Millerite on his knees, with Hannah by his side, uttered a prayer.

That was the manner of the funeral of Ann Clarke, who was buried in Potter’s field.

The second day after the fire, Stewel Pydgeon was lounging near the Railroad Depot, at the corner of Eleventh and Market streets. He was anxious to gain some intelligence of Goodleigh. Thinking that he had escaped the fire, and might make an attempt to leave the city, Stewel watched for him at the Railroad Depot.

While his eyes were fixed upon the aperture where tickets are sold, an aged man with long white hair approached, and bought tickets for himself and two boys, who, attired in blue cloth round-a-bouts, walked by his side. These boys were somewhat contrasted, in the details of their personal appearance. One was slight and slender; the other bony and rugged.

Both were attired in round-jackets and pantaloons of blue cloth, and both wore cloth caps, of the same color. The aged man, attired neatly in a blue overcoat, carried a bundle under his arm; a bundle, which, resembling a large book, was covered with a scarlet handkerchief.

Stewel watched the three, as they left the ticket office and entered the cars. The place where he stood was dark, even in daytime, and he could not see their faces with much distinctness, but their attire seemed to please him exceedingly —

“A *blue* party!” he exclaimed — and laughed at his own joke — after the manner of police officers — “They look as if they been dipped in indigo.”

With this joke — or apology for a joke — the incident passed from Stewel’s mind. He suffered the old man and his two boys to enter the cars, and go on their journey to Baltimore, without a word.

And yet the old man was our friend, the Popular Preacher.

And the tallest of the boys was Ralph Jones, otherwise called "Jonesey the B'iler."

The other boy was Fanny, the sister of Ralph.

And the bundle, which looked like a large book, was the tin box, which Ralph had concealed beneath the roof of Girard College.

And yet Stewel, standing near the ticket office, watching for Goodleigh, looked upon these three figures, dressed in blue, without a suspicious thought.

Alas! for Stewel! While he watched for Goodleigh, the tin box slipped by him, and passed on to Baltimore without an opposing word.

CHAPTER THIRTY-FIFTH.

THE LAST OF ISRAEL BONUS.

And while two days wore on, much wonder was felt and expressed in Bonus Court. Rent Day had come and gone, and Israel Bonus had not appeared to collect his rents!

Had the sun risen in the west and set in the east, doubtless the inhabitants of Bonus Court would have expressed some surprise, in common with the other citizens of the Quaker City, but that Rent Day should come and go without Israel Bonus, this was a thing which made every heart in Bonus Court dilate with a feeling akin to awe.

Never for thirty years had Israel been known to miss a Rent Day.

"Hannah," said the Millerite Preacher, taking his broad rimmed hat, on the third morning after the fire: "This absence of Israel Bonus fills me with wonder. I will call at his house — something may have happened to him. The day draws near, Hannah, when the Lord will come in the clouds of Heaven, we must meet him with clean hands and pure hearts. I would not wrong Israel out of his rent, though he is hard upon the poor. And while I am gone my child, do you take some wood and some bread to poor Nancy over the way. Her husband is in jail, you know, on a charge of theft. The poor woman must not be forgotten."

"I will not forget her father," was the response of Hannah, as she pressed her father's

hand, while her face warmed with the same looks of calm enthusiasm, which animated the countenance of the Millerite Preacher.

"You have heard nothing of Fanny — or Ralph?"

"Not a word. Their disappearance is mysterious. And what is still more remarkable, Mr. Jervis, the popular preacher, has not been heard of since the night of the fire."

The Millerite left his home, and made the best of his way to the residence of Israel Bonus. The sun was shining brightly upon the face of the mansion, as the Millerite paused at the foot of its marble steps. But there was an air of unusual desertion about the residence of Bonus, which the bright sunshine only made more apparent.

It was an old house, three stories high, and presenting the appearance of age and wear, in every faded brick. It stood in a wide street, not far from the heart of the city, and yet removed from its noise and bustle, as effectually as though it had been built in the very heart of Bonus Court. It was one of those mansions, which are not so much remarkable for the prime neatness of their exterior — characteristic of the great mass of buildings in the Quaker City — as for a look of battered antiquity, which spreads like a great spider web, over the surface of dingy brick, from the garret to the cellar.

Marvin when passing this way, had often noticed the windows on the lower floor, which were adorned by curtains of faded green reaching half way up the uncleanly window-panes. And who among the thousands of passers-by had not noticed the tin sign, which affixed to a shutter, bore in faded letters this significant inscription:—



But to the great surprise of Marvin, the shutters on the lower floor were closed, hiding green curtains, dirty windows, and the very name of Bonus, from the public gaze. The upper windows had no shutters, and therefore it may be reasonably imagined, that their dusty panes were opened to the light of the winter's

day. The house, faded at all times, and always reminding the spectator of an old parchment deed, now looked as though it had not been tenanted for years.

Marvin ascended the marble steps covered with snow and ice, and rung the bell, whose handle was coated with a rich layer of verdigris, and waited with some impatience for the sound of Bonus' footstep. Bonus, when destitute of a housekeeper, or a housekeeper's pretty daughter, was wont to answer the bell himself, and dart upon his visiter in all the magnitude of ruffled shirt, fair-top boots, and bone-headed cane.

Marvin rang and waited in vain. A half an hour elapsed, and still no Bonus appeared. Casting his eye along the door, he for the first time beheld a small piece of paper, pasted upon the panel, and containing the following important information:

"OUT OF TOWN:

Back in a few days."

"Gone to see some of his relations who live in the country," soliloquized Marvin, as he returned slowly homeward. "He has no relatives in this city, I believe. An old bachelor, without a soul on earth to care for him, or bear his name."

Two days passed, and yet Israel Bonus did not appear in Bonus Court.

The wonder of the tenants increased beyond all power of expression.

Five days had now elapsed since Bonus had been seen on Third street. The Men of Money began to wonder at his absence. His fair-top boots were sadly missed along the Coast of Barbary, and the Algerines began to ask of one another: "What has become of Bonus?"

To top the climax, and develope simple wonder into the very intensity of astonishment, on the fifth day a note of Bonus' for five hundred dollars, due at the Shaver's Bank, was handed over to the Notary Public.

Bonus *protested!* Third street began to shake in its shoes, and the Board of Brokers was affected to its inmost soul.

On the morning of the fifth day, Marvin once more ascended the marble steps—after a due survey of the closed shutters—and once more pulled the bell, with a verdigris handle.

The notice of Bonus' absence was still pasted to the door—and Marvin pulled and pulled for an half an hour, without awaking the most remote sign of life in the silent mansion.

At length he tried the handle of the door. It yielded to his touch, and the door sprung open.

"Strange indeed! Israel out of town and the door not locked!" ejaculated Marvin, as he surveyed the broad entry by the light of the morning sun: "The old man may be sick. At least it will do no harm to enter and test the matter for myself."

He entered the house of Israel Bonus, and passing along the entry—whose chill atmosphere pierced his very marrow—he soon stood at the foot of the stairs, which lighted by a circular window, wound upward into the second and third stories.

He listened for a moment: all was breathlessly still. He began to ascend the stairs, and discovered with some surprise, that every step was littered with small pieces of parchment, looking like the fragments of old title deeds. He reached the entry of the second story, and beheld the sun shining through the door at its farther end. Along the entry and through the door he passed, and in a moment found himself in a large room, furnished with but four articles of use or adornment.

A huge pine desk, painted red; an old stool with three legs; a chair with a broken back; and a map of "building lots" pinned to the smoky wall.

This was the Confessional Box of Bonus, where Bonus lent money, and listened to the pleas of money borrowers, and wrote their names in his big book, with a red morocco back.

"He is certainly out of town," murmured Marvin—"But bless me, what does this mean?"

Under the red desk, a mass of papers was rudely scattered, which to the eyes of Marvin looked like the wrecks of an hundred title deeds. The floor was littered with bits of parchment. The cover of the great book with a morocco back lay near the fireless grate, and on the bars of the grate itself, were piled the leaves of the great book, evidently in readiness for the application of a lighted match. In word, the sanctuary of Bonus had been violated.

by unholy hands. The great book, in which was inscribed the damnation of a thousand souls, was now only a mass of fragments. The title deeds, and mortgages of Bonus, severed into innumerable little pieces, now only served to relieve the nakedness of the uncarpeted floor.

"There have been robbers in this house!" ejaculated Marvin.

Was it a fancy! The sound of a human voice, seemed echoing faintly, in the next room. A very low voice, murmuring in a monotonous tone, reached the ears of the Millerite Preacher. He left the sanctuary of Bonus, passed into the entry, and halted before the door of the back room.

He now heard the voice again, but could not distinguish the words. Hush! Pressing his head against the door he listens—there are two voices! He hears them distinctly and can gather the meaning of their words.

Those words leave Marvin no time for thought. Silently unclosing the door, he gazes through the aperture, and beholds a bed resting under the light of two windows, opening toward the yard of Bonus' house.

And on that bed is stretched Israel Bonus, in full dress—wide skirted coat, ruffled shirt and fair-top boots. His broad rim and bone headed cane, lay on a chair, near the bedside. Bonus in full uniform, Bonus in bed with his clothes on, but alas! no longer the gay, jocund Bonus of other days!

For, holding the door slightly open—gazing through the aperture as he pauses on the threshold—William Marvin, beholds the face of Israel Bonus, as it is turned upwards towards the light.

That face is hideous with the same pestilence which destroyed the life of Ann Clarke. Blotched from the double-chin to the eyes, buried in wrinkles—blotched in every line and feature—the face of Israel Bonus presents a loathsome spectacle. His very eyes are sealed by the pestilence. His hands, still encircled by ruffles, are covered with the marks of the appalling disease.

And stretched upon the coverlet, in his every day attire, the wretched man turns his head from side to side, lifts his blinded eyeballs to the light, and moves his clotted lips—

"Thee must pay the mortgage by twelve o'clock, this day, or verily I will foreclose."

These words escape from his lips, as he tosses about, in the delirium engendered by the pestilence.

Marvin listened no longer, but opening wide the door entered the room. Entered, and stood thunderstricken by a new surprise.

There, perched upon a chair at the foot of the bed, was the figure of a half-naked man, who resting his elbows on his knees, and his cheeks in his hands, gazed steadily upon the face of Israel Bonus. A pair of coarse trousers and a check shirt, constituted the apparel of this man who watched by the bed of pestilence. His hair, tangled and disordered, fell over his forehead to the very brows, but could not veil the intense glare of his eyes.

"Do you think I must pay the mortgage Isr'el?" exclaimed the half-naked man, in a jesting tone—"Couldn't you let me have a leetle time?"

"Thee must pay or I will foreclose! Thee must pay or I will foreclose!" was the response of the delirious Bonus.

Marvin advanced, and at once the truth burst upon him, as he took a nearer view of the features of the man at the foot of the bed.

It was John Cattermill, watching by the death-bed of Israel Bonus.

"John! John!" ejaculated Marvin: "What does this mean?"

Without starting the man raised his face from his hands, and surveyed Marvin with a steady but half-vacant look.

"Mornin' Sir. Sit down and take a cheer. We're rayther bad off for wood, and so I had to make a fire as well as I could out o' them old books and papers."

Marvin, glancing over his shoulder, beheld the grate packed to its topmost bar, with huge account books and parchment deeds. A slight flame, half choked in a cloud of smoke, ascended from the mass.

"John! John! What have you been doing?"

John very quietly replied:

"You know I was put in M'yamensin' last Sunday night?"

"Yes—very sorry I was to hear of it."

"Well, on Tuesday mornin' I was brought up for a hearin' afore Alderman Rumjug. But I giv' the officer the slip, and came here to

have a talk with old Bonus. I got in the back way, over the fence, and by that winder."

"What was your intention, John? Surely you did not mean—"

"Fact is Mr. Marvin, I meant to settle an old account with the man. I was sure of goin' to jail for an offence which I never committed, so I thought I'd giv' 'em a reason for lockin' me up. You may have heer'd that I was rayther a quiet, sober sort of man, afore I met old Bonus?"

"Yes, John. You never drank until you encountered him—"

"And arter I met him, I became a drunkard—a loafer—and was in a fair way to become a thief. So, I thought all this over, and last Tuesday mornin' I crawled into that winder, afore Bonus was up, and to be candid with you, did think of givin' him a rap or two with some stick or poker, over his head. But—"

"Yes, John. But you relented—"

"I found him in bed, sick with a fever. I took pity on him."

The face of John, haggard and pale, with an inexplicable light in the large vacant eyes, was agitated by a slight grimace as he uttered these words.

"I took pity on him. Found a notice on his table—*Out of Town: won't be back 'till next week*—and put it on the frontdoor. Didn't want anybody to disturb him, you know? That was on Tuesday—this is Saturday. Ain't I a good Christian? Ever since Tuesday I've watched by the old man's bed."

"But John, why have you destroyed these books and papers—"

"There wasn't no wood. Do you think I was a-goin' to let the old critter suffer for fire?"

"You attended to his wants, then? How did you procure food?"

"There was a cold b'iled ham in the cellar. That I've lived upon myself. As for Bonus"—he looked into Marvin's face with a broad grin—"Don't you think a severe course o' dietin' is good for a disease like *that*?"

He pointed with his lean and skinny hand toward the bed.

"John, John, how could you behold the old man suffer, without extending a hand for his relief?"

"Did you think I was a-goin' to give him bread, when it 'ud only heighten his fever? As for water—Lord bless you! He cried for it often enough, but knew more o' th' natur' o' his disease than to give it to him. Not a drop! Not a drop!"

"This is too horrible for belief!" ejaculated Marvin, gazing first upon the half naked man, and then upon the wretched occupant of the bed.

"Horrible? How green you talk! Don't you know that unless all of old Bonus's bad blood comes out in the shape of eruptions, that the dear old man 'ill kick the bucket? Jist look at him! You think them's small pox on his face? Bless your soul—no! It's only the mortgages and ground rents a-comin' out. That's all."

And at these words, he placed his elbows on his knees, his cheeks between his hands, and turned his eyes to the bed once more.

"Isr'el, I raly can't pay up to-day—" he exclaimed, assuming the tone of a pleading debtor—"You won't turn me out into the street—will you?"

"If thee cannot pay thee must go!" said the delirious Bonus—"Hair and hide, bag and baggage, thee must go! What? Does thee think I am to be defrauded of my rent in this manner? Tut-tut!"

"Rulin' passion strong in death," cried John, turning his face to Marvin, with a grotesque leer—"Don't you think when he goes *down there*, he'll be apt to get a mortgage on the Devil hisself, and turn the imps out o' perdition, for not payin' ground rent? Hey?"

"John, how can you desert your wife?" exclaimed Marvin, wishing to touch the heart of this monomaniac—"Poor Nancy! She is destitute of bread and wood—"

"One's duty to the public al'ays take the precedence of private affairs," answered John; "I've watched by Bonus since last Tuesday, and I'll sit here till he gets well. You little know how I love that ar' old crittur!"

Marvin approached the bed. His face was clouded by an expression of unfeigned horror, when he saw that Israel Bonus, dying as much of starvation as of disease—was near his last hour. Tossing on the pillow, rolling his blinded eyeballs from side to side, the dying man still murmured in his delirium—

"Can thee pay? If thee can't pay, thee must go! So, thee has a pretty daughter? Ah! Then thee shall come and keep house for me, and I'll take care of thee daughter's education. Not less than two per cent a month. Could'nt think of it. How did thee say Pennsylvania Fives were yesterday? Can thee pay? Don't talk to me. If thee can't pay thee must go."

"Jist hear him," whispered John—"ain't it a treat? What's that the poet says about the good man's death?"

The eyes of Cattermill began to assume an expression, which impressed the mind of Marvin with a sensation of terror, which he in vain endeavoured to repress.

"He is mad," the thought crept over him—"and if I attempt to leave the room, he will prevent me with a madman's strength."

"Well, John, I must go home," he said aloud, moving to the door—"call and see us when Bonus recovers."

To his utter surprise, John calmly replied—

"Good mornin', sir. The next time you walk this way, drop in and see us."

Marvin left the room and hurried from the house, and in five minutes again returned with a crowd of neighbours, whom he had summoned to his assistance.

Once more he opened the door, and followed by the wondering crowd, entered the death-room.

Israel Bonus was there, not stretched upon the bed, but seated in an arm chair, near a window, with his broad rim on his head, and his cane in his hand.

Israel Bonus was alone; seated in the arm chair which had so long been the throne of Mortgage, Ground Rent, and Title Deed; with half his face in shadow, and the lower portion blotched by pestilence, bathed in the cheerful light of the morning sun.

It did not need a second glance to tell the spectators that Israel Bonus was no longer numbered among the living.

John Cattermill had disappeared—no one could tell how—and the spectators, gathering silently around the dead man, with wonder and awe upon every face, stood for many minutes, rooted to the floor, their eyes centred upon the dead face of Israel Bonus.

John Cattermill was never seen again in the Quaker City.

CHAPTER THIRTY-SIXTH.

"THE END OF THE WORLD DRAWS NIGH."

Charles Lester, recovering from his fever, began to walk abroad again.

The spring was upon the earth once more, and despite the gloom which overshadowed him, he began to feel the blood bounding freely in his veins again. Peter pursued his search after the Preacher; and of course his search was vain.

Charles was much in company with the Millerite Preacher. His mind, depressed by an ever present sorrow, was prepared for the reception of the Millerite's doctrine. They talked long and earnestly together—together they read the Bible, and attempted to follow the finger of God, in the book of Daniel and the book of Revelations.

"Is Charley a-goin' to jine these Millerites?" Peter soliloquized one day; "Should like to know. Wish I could get him out of this town, into the prairies once more. Bad, very bad, the atmosphere of the Quaker City."

A month passed in this manner. Still no intelligence reached the ears of Charles Lester concerning the Preacher or the daughter of Alice Bayne. Wandering through the city, day after day, in company with Marvin the Millerite, Charles sought incessantly for the Preacher and for Fanny, and his search was fruitless.

And the Millerite many times concluded his long and earnest conversations, with these singular words:

"Never mind, Charles. These matters will soon cease to trouble you. The twenty-third of April draws nigh."

Charles' eyes, vacant at other times with the abstraction of a settled melancholy, would light up at these words, and impart a look of sudden rapture to his haggard face.

For at the moment when the birds were singing, and the leaves were budding—when the world recovering from the death of winter was springing into life again—Charles had given up all the prospects and hopes of existence.

He was the last of his race. The graves of all his people were in the churchyard of the western land.

Fanny, the daughter of Alice, whom he had hoped to save, was now lost to him, and lost to purity forever. The last victim of the Popular Preacher, she was following the path which led to an untimely death and an unblest grave.

"The twenty-third of April!" these words often passed the lips of Charles after a long-continued reverie.

On the Twenty-third of April the world was to come to an End.

The Saviour would appear in the clouds of heaven; the earth and all the elements would melt with fervent heat. The awful images of the Revelations would start into actual life. From the chaos of an expiring universe, a new heaven and a new earth would struggle into being.

How many thousands, and tens of thousands in the year 1843, throughout the extent of the Union, held this belief, and daily watched for the coming of the Lord?

How many hearts throbbed with unutterable awe, at the mention of the day, when all these things should come to pass — the twenty-third of April, 1843?

The 'Twenty Third of April came at last.

In the morning, Peter who had wandered into the — Hotel in Chesnut Street, (where seated in the reading room he awaited the appearance of Charles,) was much interested in the following paragraph which met his eye in the columns of the Daily Copper:

"THE REV. EDWARD JERVIS.—This eloquent gentleman was in Adamston, State of Illinois, in the latter part of March. We are pleased to learn that an extensive and interesting revival of religion, was in progress in Adamstown during the presence of this pious and eminent Minister. Thousands were affected to tears by his preaching, and hundreds, impelled to a better life by his irresistible appeals, have become members of his Church. Indeed wherever this gentleman goes, the blessings of Providence attends his efforts, in a manner too remarkable not to be mentioned."

This paragraph, its grammar, piety and praise, was evidently from the pen of Slinkum Scissleby, Sub-Editor of the Daily Copper.

"Adamston is not five miles from Prairie Home," ejaculated Peter, "Charley must know this afore I'm a-second older. The vil-

lian! Holdin' one of his revivals not five miles from Ellen's grave!"

Peter hurried without delay to the room of Charles, but Charles was not to be found.

"He is in Bonus Court with that Millerite!" exclaimed Peter, and without delay he hurried to Bonus Court.

The place, drear and gloomy at all times, now looked the very abode of desolation.

The house where Ann Clarke had died, was tenantless. The doors and windows were open, and the dust had accumulated on the floors. At least one-half of the houses of Bonus Court were in a similar condition.

Peter hurried to the residence of the Rev. William Marvin. Doors and shutters closed, it presented a blank and deserted appearance.

"This is queer," soliloquized Peter — "Everybody out o' town and Charley not to be found."

As he spoke, his attention was attracted by a paper pasted upon the shutter, and bearing the following inscription, traced in a round and legible hand:

THE OWNER OF THIS HOUSE
HAS GONE TO WAIT THE COMING OF THE LORD.
WM. MARVIN.

April 23, 1843.

"Well he might a-told me *whar* he's gone to, and *whar* he expects to find the Lord!"

Thus soliloquizing, Peter once more departed on his search. All day long he sought for Charles — sought in every haunt of business or pleasure — in the Hotels, the Stores, and along the crowded streets — and toward night, was forced to give up the search in very despair.

As night fell, he went to the Post Office, as was his custom and enquired for a letter for "Charles Lester."

To his surprise, the clerk placed a letter in his hand, directed to "CHARLES LESTER, Philadelphia," and bearing the following post-mark "Prairie-Home, Ill., April 5."

This letter completed the wonder and deepened the anxiety of our good friend Peter.

"Prairie Home! Did'nt know that anybody *thar* know'd anything about Charley's comin' to 'Fildelfy. What's this letter about? That Preacher and the gal! I'll stake my head upon it."

Much perplexed, Peter returned to the Hotel, and took his seat in the reading room, inspecting the face of every new-comer, in his anxiety to behold the countenance of Charles Lester once more. Attired still in the scarlet coat, he placed his huge boots upon a neighboring chair, drew a cigar from his pocket, and soon encircled himself in a cloud of tobacco smoke. His eyes fixed upon the letter he resigned himself to his meditations, and murmured every now and then, between the puffs of smoke, some broken sentence like this —

“Know’d her when she was a baby. Know’d her when she was a gal. Know’d her when she was a corpse.”

The honest backwoodsman, thus quietly meditating, little knew the contents of the letter, which he held in his brawny hand.

CHAPTER THIRTY-SEVENTH.

“THE CAMP OF THE LORD.”

Leave Philadelphia, reader, and cross the Schuylkill by the Market Street Bridge.

Follow the road that leads into the open country, and do not pause, until you stand beside a black and barren field which slopes from the turnpike to a distant wood.

The sky is obscured by driving clouds. A misty rain is falling, and the wind howls in gusts.

Gaze over the bleak expanse of this field, and tell me, what is it that intervenes between your gaze, and the dull leaden sky?

A white tent, rising distinctly from the brown field, and with gleams of light escaping from its parted curtains.

From that tent, a low murmuring sound escapes. Approach its curtains; do not heed the leaden sky and driving blast; cross the field, and stand within the gleam of those wandering rays. Listen!

That sound, lately so low and murmuring, now becomes distinct and intelligible.

It is the voice of praise and prayer. The voices of men, women, and children, melting together, in one incessant hymn and supplication.

This white tent, echoing with praise and prayer, the storm beating on its roof, and the bleak waste and the dark night, all around it,

strikes you with an impression of curiosity modified by awe.

You pause on the drenched sod; you place your hand upon the curtain; while the gust howls over the field, you part the curtains and look within:

Dim lights are burning there. Rude tallow candles, inserted into rough boards, shed their uncertain light over a thousand faces. The faces of aged men — of fair and delicate women — of children, who had scarcely passed the dawn of life — all uplifted, and all imbued with the same look of rapture and fear.

They are singing now — listen to their hymn!

Its burden steals into your soul, you know not why. ’Tis but an unpretending hymn, deficient in rhyme and rugged in its words, and yet the voices of these kneeling worshippers mingling in one sound, as if their hearts were inspired by one soul, impart to it a music and a passion that may well be deemed supernatural.

“The Lord is coming” — this is the burden of the hymn — “ere the midnight hour has struck, Jesus will come in the clouds of Heaven, and call his wandering children home. The unbelievers will expire in the agonies of an expiring world. The children of the Lord, those who have loved his name and watched for him long, will pass into Eternity without the change of death. Gathered from a burning world, by the Divine Redeemer, they will arise at once — without a sigh or pang to the Mansions of their God.”

In a word, reader, we are in the Camp of the Millerites. These men and women, these rich and poor, these people gathered from all classes of the social world, have pitched their tent in the barren field, away from the sin and life of the Great City, and here they have determined to await the coming of the Lord.

Do not call them fanatics. Grave Divines, for hundreds of years, have been writing great books, concerning the Prophecies of Daniel and the Book of Revelations. These people of the tent, these despised Millerites have merely carried the speculations of the learned Divines into practice. They have summed up the opinions of the sagacious theologians, concerning the Millenium, and the amount of their researches, is comprised in this line —



"MERCY! DO NOT HANG ME!" CRIED JERRY, AS HIS LIMBS GAVE WAY, AND HE SANK TO THE GROUND.
 "SAY THE WORD, AND HE'LL SWING!" EXCLAIMED PETER.—See p. 206.

"On the Twenty-third of April, 1843, the world will come to an end, and the Millenium begin."

Do not treat with idle scorn this fanaticism of the Millerites: It is true, that the only Millenium preached by the Bible of Revelation, and the Bible of Nature, is embraced in a single brief sentence:

"When every man in the world looks to the welfare of his brother, then the Lord Christ will appear on the earth, not in bodily shape, but in the happiness of the whole family of man."

The truth contained in this sentence, has been too simple for your Theologians. They prefer to amuse themselves with speculations on the moods and tenses of dead languages, or the Prophecies of Daniel, or the Mysteries of Revelations—and blunder deeper into learned darkness, until they have left the plain facts of the Gospel of Nazareth, altogether out of sight. Do you blame the poor that they have at last believed the theologians, and turned their theological riddle into an every-day fact?

A solitary man stands up in the centre of the kneeling throng. It is William Marvin, whose plain features are now imbued with a calm—almost—god-like rapture. Claspings his knees, a little child with hazel eyes and nut-brown hair looks lovingly into his face.

And behind Marvin, in the shadows of the rude pillar which supports the roof of the tent, behold a young man who stands alone, with folded arms and head bent upon his breast. His eyes are well-nigh buried under his compressed brows: there are the traces of a violent mental struggle—a struggle of doubt and hope—visible in every line of his countenance.

It is Charles Lester, listening in silence to the words of the Millerite Preacher.

"Brothers! Sisters! The time approaches. The end of all things is at hand." The voice of Marvin scarcely rising above a whisper, is heard distinctly in every part of the tent; heard in every heart, and answered by sobs of prayer. "The hour of twelve is near. When the clock strikes twelve, the Lord will come."

These words doubtless seem altogether plain and unmeaning. But there was the power of

a singular magnetism in the Preacher's eye, and every heart within the shelter of that tabernacle, beat with that divine magnetism which men call FAITH.

Charles Lester drew forth his watch: it was within five minutes of the hour of twelve. Impressed by the long conversation of the Millerite, and yet unable to believe in his doctrine, Charles had come to this tent as a mere spectator. He had watched there all day long. And now against his will he felt the magnetic tide which flowed from heart to heart—pervading the crowd as with the pulsation of a supernatural power—glide into his own soul, and storm the last entrenchment of his unbelief.

His eyes caught the fire which shone from a thousand eyes. He clasped his hands, and raised his voice in prayer.

Beside the form of the Millerite, rose the figure of a woman clad in white, who lifted her hands above the crowd, and spoke to their hearts a rhapsody such as might have fallen from a Prophetess of the far gone olden time.

A young woman, whose plain features, shaded by light brown hair, warmed suddenly into a hallowed beauty—whose eyes of dark grey, suddenly shone with the clear deep lustre of enthusiasm or prophecy—whose voice, at first faint and tremulous, rose gradually into accents of melody, which swept into every heart like music from a Better World.

It was Hannah Marvin, the Millerite's Daughter.

Alone she stood, lifted above the crowd, her whole dress standing out palpably from the background of deep shadow.

It was now within three minutes of the hour of twelve.

"He comes! The Lord who walked the sands of Palestine, and watered the earth with tears. He comes! The Lord who made his resting place with the Poor, and went day after day, among their homes, raising their sick, feeding their suffering and telling every one—even the basest child of want—'in my Father's house are many mansions——'"

At this moment, Charles who stood near the pillar, entranced as much by the tone as by the words of the Woman, felt an unknown hand pressed within his own. He turned and beheld the rugged visage of our friend Peter

"Read!" he whispered forcing a letter into the hand of Lester.

Charles broke the seal, and by the dim light read the letter, and without pausing for a moment after he had devoured its contents, he descended from the platform and hurried through the kneeling crowd, with Peter following at his heels.

"Whither go you!" cried Marvin, his eye vacant and absent, with the light of enthusiasm.

Charles did not pause to answer, but hurried on.

"He goes to mingle once more with the cares and sins of earth," the voice of the Millerite Prophetess reached the ears of the fugitive—"Woe! woe! to the disciple who turns his back upon the Lord!"

And the words were echoed by a thousand voices, but Charles hurried on. The contents of the letter, eagerly traced by the dim light, had once more aroused the fires of Revenge within his breast. His teeth set together, his face corrugated with the dark lines of hatred, he rushed from the tent into the dark night, exclaiming as he pointed to the distant city:

"There lies our way! We will track this fiend in human shape to the end of the earth! Before morning light, we must be on our way to the west—aye—on our way to *Prairie Home*."

And they went forth together, the hardy backwoodsman and the Brother of Ellen.

Meanwhile within the tent of the Millerites, a thousand hearts were beating in expectation of the Coming Lord. While the Prophetess spoke, her every word answered by bursts of praise and prayer, the last three minutes passed away.

The hour of twelve came at last.

And a thousand hearts were hushed in awe while the voice of the Woman were in the accents of triumph that was almost divine—

"Arise! Arise! I hear the footsteps of the Lord—I feel the rustling of the angels' wings—I feel the presence of our God! Arise! Arise! And greet the first day of the new-born world!"

And for three days and nights they waited there in rain and storm, in hunger and cold, looking to Heaven with a faith that grew stronger with every hour.

And returning at last, sad and dispirited to their deserted homes—mocked at every step by scoffs and jeers—derided by the very Theologians whose speculations they had so blindly followed—these believers in the *Millenium*, sat once more amid the cares and pains of life.

Many of them who had looked for the Lord in the clouds of Heaven, found him in the quiet of their Homes and in the peace of their Hearts.

Shall we read the letter, which postmarked "*Prairie Home*," aroused once more the love of life and the passion of vengeance within the breast of Charles Lester? A single paragraph may throw some light upon the progress of this history:

PRAIRIE HOME, Ill., April 4, 1843.

Jervis has been preaching in this county. He is accompanied by a man who calls himself *Dr. Arthur Baldwin*, and who has two young persons with him, whom he calls his children. Do you know anything of this "*Popular Preacher*?" May he not be the same person who, under an assumed name

And thus it appeared that Fanny and Ralph had discovered their Father at last.

CHAPTER THIRTY-EIGHTH.

CHOKTIPAW.

Do you see yonder mansion which stands upon the hill, above the town of Choktipaw?

The night is dark; the sky is obscured by one dense mass of leaden clouds, fringed with lightning gleams upon the horizon, and the town of Choktipaw sleeps quiet and snug between the hillside and the broad river. But this mansion, tall and stately, and built half-way up the hill, is illuminated from garret to cellar. The lofty trees which rise on either hand, with trunks like sculptured columns, and foliage thick and branching like the canopy of a tent, are reddened on every leaf by the gleams of light which stream from the mansion windows.

That house to-night may be seen from a great distance. Illuminated for a festival, and crowded with guests from far and near, it shines through the darkness, and looks glad

and joyous in the midst of the black and desolate night.

And where is this town of Choktipaw? In Arkansas, good friend, near a commanding hill and upon the shore of a broad river. More we dare not tell.

For a week the town of Choktipaw has been the scene of great excitement. The Celebrated Preacher—the Popular Preacher—the eloquent and pious Edmund Jervis, appeared last week in Choktipaw, and has preached in the ——— Church of Choktipaw, and fired all Choktipaw with the enthusiasm of his own saintly soul. For a week a revival has been in progress; one of the Popular Preacher's revivals, which spread like fire in a drought, and bring mourners by hundreds to the altar.

Everybody is occupied with Jervis. His looks, his tones, the whiteness of his cravat, the elegant fit of his black frock coat, the pathos of his uplifted eyes, the alabaster delicacy of his hands, the sweetness of his manner—such have been the topics of Choktipaw for a week, and Choktipaw still talks them over and over again.

And to-night the Great Preacher is to be married. To whom? Do not be impatient. Look through the windows of this elegant mansion on the hillside, and survey the brilliant assemblage of wedding guests. Beautiful girls, grave matrons, sober farmers, and dashing gentlemen of much leisure and many slaves, are gathered there in a spacious parlor, by the light of waxen candles, awaiting impatiently the appearance of three persons—the Minister, the Bridegroom, and the Bride. For the whole country, at least the religion and gentility of the country for twenty miles, have been gathered to-night to the mansion of Col. Thorberry, where the Popular Preacher is to wed his young and beautiful Bride.

While the guests are waiting on the ground-floor, while the rich steams of the marriage supper steal out into the open air, and charm the nostrils of the negroes, who are grouped near the brilliantly illuminated windows—let us ascend into a chamber on the second floor, and listen to an important conversation.

A grave sedate man, with a round face, short and portly figure, black dress and white cravat, is seated in an arm chair, beside a

table, on which a lamp is burning. He rests his elbow on the table, and supports his round cheek in the hollow of his hand, and gazes with a calm sweet look, into the face of a young girl, who attired in spotless white, kneels at his feet, and places her clasped hands upon his knees.

Her dark hair is covered by a veil of transparent lace, which relieves the colorless pallour of her face, and imparts a new loveliness to her calm white forehead, and delicately pencilled brows. Beautiful in her white bridal dress, she looks upward, into her Father's face, her large eyes swimming in tears.

For it is Fanny and her Father that we behold. In other words, Dr. Arthur Baldwin and his long lost Daughter. But Dr. Baldwin has been dead for a year past—Has he? Tell that story to the gossips of Choktipaw and they will laugh in your face. Do they not know the whole story? How the eloquent Preacher discovered the long lost daughter of the wealthy Dr. Baldwin, in the suburbs of Philadelphia, and how the beautiful girl fell in love with the Preacher, and obtained her father's consent for the marriage? Not a child in all Choktipaw but has the story by heart.

And now, while the marriage supper is preparing and while the marriage guests are waiting, here in this quiet chamber, the Father and the Daughter have met for an interesting conversation.

"Did not Edmund discover you in Philadelphia?"

"Yes, Father"—

"Did he not rescue you and Harry from the dangers of a city life? Answer me, Annie?"

Annie and Harry you must bear in mind, have taken the place of Fanny and Ralph?

"Yes, father"—

"Did not Edmund send me word that he had found you—found my long lost children—" the Dr. passed a finger over each eye: "And did he not bring you to meet me, without delay?"

"I remember it well, father. We met near Prairie Home in Illinois. And then we resumed our journey, and came to this town a week ago. I remember it all, and thank Edmund for his kindness, and speak of him every hour, in my prayers, but —"

"But Annie!" answered Dr. Baldwin, gently

raising his right hand, while an expression of deep sorrow came over his face—"But you don't wish to marry him. Can it be, my child! Edmund who has restored you to my arms—Edmund who has been the means of your conversion—Edmund who walks the earth, like a Disciple of the Apostolic era—Edmund, gifted, pious, eloquent and popular! And you do not wish to marry a man like this! My child, my child!"

Covering his face with his hands, he seemed much affected by the conduct of his beloved child. Poor Fanny—for we must call her by her old name—beheld his unfeigned emotion, and burst into tears.

"Father! Father! Do not I beseech you, think me ungrateful or unkind! You have only to speak and I will obey—"

He raised his eyes, and smiled and patted her cheek with his hand.

"That's a good child. You will obey your poor, weak, affectionate father, who loves you, all too fondly? You will chase these tears away, and forget these words of disobedience, and give your hand, willingly to our dear, dear Edmund?"

"But Father—"

"That's enough, my dear. Go, child. Your bridesmaids are waiting for you in the next room. Go—compose your thoughts—whisper a prayer or two that the old Adam may be conquered in your heart—and prepare to meet your dear Edmund, with a loving heart, and countenance adorned with peace."

He raised Fanny from her knees. Hushing her words by a gentle pressure of his hand upon her lips, he urged her to the door, and kissed her on the forehead, whispering—

"Bless you my child! Don't break its poor old father's heart—that's a blessed child."

And thus Fanny left her father, and went to join her bridal maidens. Dr. Baldwin was alone. Walking along the carpet, from the window to the light, and back again, he seemed absorbed in a pleasing reverie. He drew forth his watch, after a silence of some fifteen minutes and exclaimed—

"Half-past eight! Eh? The time moves slowly. At nine they are married."

When he raised his gaze from the watch, the Popular Preacher stood before him.

You may have often heard the bold figure, "he looks as if he had just stepped from a band box"—but bold and imaginative as it seems, it was realized by the Popular Preacher on this occasion.

His dress coat was of the sleekest and glossiest black cloth. His cravat, was of cambric, elaborately starched; his pantaloons, fitting closely to his limbs, were as black and as glossy as his faultless coat. Boots of polished leather, very neat and tight, pinched his feet into the smallest possible compass. And then his face—blooming on the cheek, white upon the forehead, smiling on the lips and flashing in the eyes—his face seemed to have suddenly cast aside the burden of twenty years, as a ripe silk-worm casts aside its caterpillar skin, and in an instant, starts into a rainbow butterfly. From the cocoon of forty-five years growth—to grasp a bold figure—the silk-worm of a new youth, had emerged into life.

The top-knot on his forehead, was softened down, into a mild and wavy curl. There was an odor of cologne and patchoulli about the man, from head to foot. The delicate hand—we mean his left hand—sparkled with a diamond ring upon the marriage finger.

No sooner did the Dr. behold him, than he laid his finger significantly upon his lips:

"Well, Doctor? How is it now?" whispers the Preacher.

"All right. She yields to her fond old father."

"You will marry us Dr.? You are an Elder of our church you know, and have a right to celebrate the rites of marriage? Besides it will be a fine spectacle—the father not only giving away his beloved child, but performing the marriage ceremony for her. It will have a good effect."

"Well, Edmund if you insist, I suppose I must comply. By the bye Jervis we leave in the morning"—

"On our way to New Orleans. There—you understand—we will sail for Europe"—

"That is, you and I?"

"Yes—of course. Leaving these children in New Orleans, while we make the European tour in company."

"Yes. The funds are all right—eh? What have you done with Ralph? Harry

I should have said, but one forgets the name of a child, whom one has lost for nineteen years."

"He is all right, Dr. He has long since entrusted the tin box to my charge. And then I have had many opportunities to win his confidence, during our journey to the west. You know the boy is uncouth—but grateful—"

"Where is he now?"

"I was afraid his rude demeanor might give our friends an unfavorable opinion of him, so when he told me an hour ago that he wished to join a hunting party to-night, I cheerfully acquiesced. And he will not be back until morning."

"Go my dear Edmund. It is near the time. Compose your mind for this affecting ceremony. Go—I will join you down stairs in a few moments."

And with these words the Father parted from the Bridegroom.

Their conversation which we have just recorded, may not seem important to the reader. But had you witnessed the smiles, the winks and gestures, which accompanied its every word, you would have been in no doubt concerning the prospects and intentions of this worthy pair.

The Marriage Ceremony!

Pale and beautiful in her white robes, Fanny stood in the centre of the crowd of wedding guests, and took the Preacher by the hand, while her father pronounced the marriage vows.

And many a beautiful damsel there, envied the lot of the daughter of Alice Bayne, and many a wealthy father, desired with all his soul, a Bridegroom like the Preacher for every one of his children.

When the marriage words were spoken, Jervis pressed the marriage kiss on the lips of his young wife. Fanny blushed and trembled, and seemed to shrink from his touch, but that was only maidenly modesty.

Close upon the heels of the marriage ceremony, followed the marriage supper. Why chronicle minutely the events of that bountiful feast? How Fanny in all her blushes, sat at the head of the table, beside the portly owner of the mansion, Col. Thorberry; with her

Husband on one hand, and her Father not far away? How the feast began with a voluminous grace and continued for two busy hours, until midnight drew near?

The negroes are dancing on the lawn without, and the sound of banjo and fiddle, rings merrily on the air.

A happy marriage, a beautiful bride, a pious, learned, eloquent and handsome bridegroom!

CHAPTER THIRTY-NINTH.

THE BRIDAL BED.

Soon after midnight, the Bridesmaids led the Young Wife to the Bridal Chamber.

And after a prayer, which long and full of unction, seemed to consecrate the harmless mirth of the marriage festival, the Bridegroom slipped quietly away, and went up the stair way toward the Bridal Chamber.

At the threshold he paused, even as his hand was laid upon the door. He listened—all was gaiety and uproar below, but where he stood a silence like death prevailed.

Gently opening the door, he entered the Bridal Chamber.

It was the largest chamber in Col. Thorberry's elegant mansion. Rich curtains along the windows, which opened upon the balcony, rich carpet upon the floor, and pictures in glittering frames upon the walls.

Upon a small table, near the centre of the carpet, stood a lamp, which shed a faint, and yet voluptuous light around the place.

And in the rays of the light, appeared the snowy canopy of the Marriage Couch, with curtains as white and stainless, falling to the carpet, in long and sweeping folds.

As he beheld the bed, the Bridegroom paused and pressed his finger to his lips, while his small eyes, enlarging in their sockets, shone with a fiery lustre.

There, sheltered within the white curtains—like a budding flower, within its leaves—his Bride awaited him.

"Fanny!" he whispered, in an impassioned tone, calling her by the name which she had borne from childhood.

She did not answer.

Was she sleeping?

The Preacher stole on tip-toe to the bed, and laid his hand upon the curtains. They

were closed, and the Bride was concealed within their tightly gathered folds.

"Fanny!" he breathed her name once more and listened. His face kindled with a warmth that gave a singular look of youth and passion to every feature. His eyes emitted a stream of magnetic light.

Still no answer was heard from within the curtains of the marriage bed.

"She has sunk to slumber," whispered the Preacher-Bridegroom—"I will gaze upon her as she sleeps. I will wake her with a kiss."

He drew the curtains and looked within. He did not behold his young wife's face, for in her slumber she had drawn the coverlet over her head, but the outlines of her form were dimly perceptible by the faint light.

"Poor child! Scared by an unpleasant dream, she has buried herself in the coverlet. Let me wake her gently. Yes, let me wake her with a kiss."

He slowly raised the coverlet.

And the next instant his face became livid, he stood paralyzed by the bed, unable to speak or stir, his lips apart and his eyes projecting from their sockets.

What was the sight which caused this sudden and fearful change?

Fanny in her sleep, with her dark hair, waving in glossy blackness, over her stainless bosom? No.

Fanny dead—her eyes fixed—her bosom pulseless—her stiffened hands, folded over her lifeless yet beautiful form? No.

Let us explain the mystery in a few words.

When the Preacher slowly lifted the coverlet, a voice very deep and hoarse, and altogether unlike the mild accents of Fanny, greeted him, with these remarkable words:

"How *air* you?"

And the Preacher, in the place of the young and blooming form of his Bride, beheld a red face, adorned with white whiskers, and surrounded by a fur cap. And beneath this red face, appeared a huge form, clad in a scarlet over-coat, corduroy trowsers, and boots with soles half an inch thick.

It needed no second glance to inform the Bridegroom, that where his Bride should have

been, his old acquaintance, even the giant Peter was snugly reposing.

It was indeed our old friend, Peter.

There was an affectionate smile upon his lips, and a jovial twinkle in his eyes.

"How *air* you?" he repeated, turning his face toward the Preacher: "How *air* you, honey?" and lovingly he spread forth his brawny arms.

You cannot fail to perceive, that the Preacher had good reason for his surprise. Braver men than Jervis, would have been astonished by an occurrence like this.

"Why don't you speak to me?" cried Peter, extending his brawny hand, and clenching the paralyzed wretch by the collar—"Don't you love me?" Peter displayed his teeth from ear to ear—"Come to bed honey. It's late and we'll have to be stirrin' airly in the mornin'."

He dragged the Preacher upon the bed, and impressed upon him, the sad necessity of silence with these words:

"Jist speak above your breath dear, and—" and the cold muzzle of a pistol touched the Preacher's forehead.

And then Peter, drawing from the fathomless depths of his pockets, a piece of cord, and certain silken handkerchiefs of various colours, proceeded to bind the limbs of the bridegroom, even as he lay upon his marriage bed.

"Where is my wife?" gasped Jervis.

"Ellen? She was in her grave when I last heer'd from her. You may have a chance to meet her soon."

"You don't mean to kill me?" the poor wretch shuddered, as he lay upon the bridal bed.

"Not so loud. Low, very low you must speak, if you don't want to raise my temper. Hark now! The folks down stairs are about retirin' to their beds. The niggers have gone away from the front of the house. Now if you'll do me the kindness, jist obey a few directions, and it 'ill be mighty good for your wholesome. You hear—"

"I am listening—" murmured Jervis.

"I'm jist a goin' to carry you out o' the winder and along the balcony. 'Thar at the end of the balcony, a ladder is ready, and

near the ladded a half dozen good fellows, on stout horses. You'll jist have the kindness, to let yourself be carried off quietly. That's all. If you make the least noise, I'll be obliged to—" once more the muzzle of the pistol touched the forehead of the Preacher.

"I consent," faltered the Preacher, "only spare my life."

Peter bound a black kerchief over his eyes. Then creeping from the bed, he raised the blindfolded man in his arms and bore him through the opened window, out upon the balcony.

The Preacher felt a strange sinking of the heart, as he passed the confines of his Bridal Chamber.

Peter passing along the balcony, descended a ladder which stood at one extremity, and by this ladder reached the ground. He found himself in the centre of a crowd of horsemen, whose faces were not distinguishable in the darkness.

"All right?" said a voice—the Preacher knew it, and muttered to himself the solitary word: "Lester!"

"Yes—right and snug," exclaimed Peter, answering the voice.

"Mount then, and let's be moving," the voice was heard again.

"Aye, aye," said Peter, as holding the Preacher in his arms, he sprang into the saddle.

"Forward!" cried the voice again, and twenty horses thundered over the lawn, toward the public road.

The Preacher, clasped in the firm embrace of Peter, could not realize the scene. He believed himself entangled in the wonders of a nightmare.

For an hour the horsemen pursued their way in silence. Every time that the Preacher attempted to speak, his mouth was closed by Peter's brawny hand.

"You see, my dear," Peter whispered, growing communicative as they dashed along: "You ought to feel grateful to Charles and me. We came all the way from Fildelfy arter you. We arriv' jist afore dark to-night at Choktipaw, and met Ralph in the woods a little west of the town. He spoke of a huntin' party did he not?"

The Preacher uttered a deep groan.

"That child looks green, but he ain't. Bless your soul not a bit of it. Do you know that he had overheer'd some conversation between you and that Dr. Baldwin *whom you raised from the dead*, and consequently he begin to have some suspicions about you. But he did not know what to do, or whom to talk to. He was resolved, howsomdever, to watch you and the Doctor purty close, and to keep an especial eye to that *tin box*. You take? So jist afore dusk he meets us in the woods a little west of Choktipaw, and we soon come to an understandin'. You don't know who "*we*" means? Listen, my gospel brother, and I'll give you a hint. Suppose a dozen stout boys from Illinois get on your track, and suppose a dozen boys from Choktipaw j'ine 'em. What then? The Choktipaw folks (in the secret) go to your weddin' while the *suckers* from Illinois lay their plans around the house, and make their reckonin' to steal your wife away fust—and then her father—and then *you*!"

Again the Preacher groaned.

"You see Charley wanted to take Fanny away from the house without raisin' a fuss. So he waited until the weddin' was over, and the bride safe in bed, when—d'ye hear, my friend? When Ralph gits into her room through the balcony, and has a talk, and a very important talk it was, with his sister. Arter that talk, it was all up with you, my dear. When poor Fan was told by her brother, that her father wasn't her father, an' that the minister who married her wasn't a minister at all—Lord! The poor girl fairly jumped for joy!"

The Preacher uttered a sound between his teeth, which very much resembled an oath.

"One reason why Lester didn't seize you at the weddin' party, was this, my friend. The Choktipaw folks, whom he acquainted with your villany, just wished to see for their own satisfaction, whether or no you would really go on with your *mock marriage*. They saw you married, sat aside o' you at the supper, and then were convinced, that you was—exactly what you *air*!"

"But where are you taking me?" groaned Jervis, as he was borne rapidly over a road, which led through a dark forest.

"Wait a little while, and you'll see. Fanny and Ralph and *your Dr. Baldwin*, have gone ahead. 'They're expectin' us now.'"

"But Col. Thorberry will avenge this outrage!" muttered the Preacher.

"I'll give you a hundred dollars if you'll go back to Thorberry's arter we're done with you: that is supposen' you *can* walk or ride, arter we're fixed you. Bless your soul, Thorberry, and all about Choktipaw will know all about you, to-morrow mornin'. It's only to spare you the pain o' layin' some years in jail, that we take you off in this way, and give you a touch of Justice in the rough."

CHAPTER FORTY.

THE END OF THE PREACHER.

And the horsemen dashed on. Thus another hour passed away. At length the company came to a halt, and the bandage was removed from the Preacher's eyes. Placed on his feet once more, he gazed around, and found himself in the centre of a novel scene.

It was a nook in the forest bounded by the the trunks of colossal trees, and shaded by their closely matted branches.

Torches, held in the hands of brawny men, dressed in great coats and armed to the teeth, gave a red glare to the leaves, to the massive trees, the forms of the horses, and the faces of the spectators.

Jervis surveyed these spectators, who encircled him on every hand. His heart leaped to his throat, as he recognized many of the planters, who had graced his marriage supper, not more than three hours before. And there too, were sturdy men, from Illinois, whom he had known during the life of Ellen Lester.

"It's all up with us," said a voice at his back—turning suddenly, Jervis beheld a half naked figure, very short and somewhat corpulent, whose uncovered back bore the red marks of a hickory rod. "I could'nt stand it, Jervis—they struck so awful hard—and so I owned up. You'd better follow suit."

The voice and the half naked figure belonged to the *pretended* Dr. Baldwin.

"Aint you a purty pair!" the Preacher knew the voice, and turning, beheld the form of Ralph, clad in blue jacket and trowsers,

with the tin box in his hand: "To go and run off with a couple o' orphans in this style! What do you expect will become o' you, arter the devil gits you?"

At this point of the scene, another form advanced. The Preacher knew the face at a glance, and a fear, such as he had never felt before, thrilled him in every vein.

It was Charles Lester. Pale, haggard, his head uncovered, and eyes deep sunken in their sockets, he advanced from the crowd, with weaponless hands, and looked into the Preacher's face without a word.

The Preacher shrank back from that steady gaze. He could not meet the eye of Lester.

"Friends, you have heard the story of this man's crimes," said Lester in a voice unnaturally calm. "I have followed him for many an hour, and over many a weary mile—Edmund Jervis! we have met at last!"

He made a sign to Peter, and Peter came from the throng of silent spectators, holding a knotted rope in his hand.

"Mercy! Do not hang me!" cried Jervis, as his limbs gave way, and he sank to the ground: "This would be a murder! You dare not attempt it—"

Peter without a word, tore the white cravat away, and arranged one end of the cord around the Preacher's neck. The other end he flung over the oaken branch which extended above the kneeling wretch.

"Say the word, and he'll swing," exclaimed Peter.

"You dare not murder me!" shrieked the Popular Preacher, as he felt the rope about his neck: "Brother Markham, Brother Edmunds, Brother Finchley, you know me—you have heard me preach—you will not permit this outrage!" He turned toward the persons whom he addressed by name, and who had sat near him at the marriage festival.

There was no response. The torch light only revealed a circle of stern and unpitiful faces.

"Mount my friends," cried Charles Lester. Before an instant passed every horseman was mounted again—every one save Peter who stood beside the criminal. "We rest to-night at your house, friend Williams, which if I mistake not, is but a quarter of a mile distant

from this place? The young lady whom we rescued from the clutches of these villains, is already there? Is she not?"

The horseman whom he addressed, murmured assent, and the Preacher heard him declare that Fanny was sleeping in the mansion, not more than a quarter of a mile from the spot where he was kneeling.

"If she was here, she at least would save me!" he gasped, turning his livid face from the light.

As for the pretended Dr. Baldwin, he was borne in the arms of a sturdy horseman, who had determined—in accordance with the judgment of the company—to convey him some miles from the scene, and then set him free with the convict's stripes upon his naked back.

"Are you ready?" cried Charles: "Extinguish the torches, and let us begone!"

With one movement the torches were dashed to the ground, and the scene was wrapped in darkness. The sound of hoofs suddenly broke upon the stillness of the woods.

"Spare me," groaned Jervis, when he found himself alone with Peter—the rope about his neck and the oaken bough above his head.

Peter did not reply in words, but drew the limb down toward his breast and tied the rope firmly around its rugged bark.

When he released his hold the limb sprang back to its place, and the body of the Preacher dangled in the air.

"I know'd Ellen," ejaculated Peter, as he left the scene, and walked along the path by which the horseman had disappeared.

Epilogue.

Wisconsin!

Among the latest-born of the great family of American Nations, this young state by her code of humanity, shames the barbarous laws which yet prevail in the Atlantic States.

Reader let us leave the Quaker City, and go forth together, into the free forests of Wisconsin, where the blessing of God is written in every flower—where the breeze, that comes over river and prairie, is not tainted with the breath of the Great City's crimes.

It is a summer evening, in the year 1848.

Let us stand upon the brow of the rock, which overlooks the broad river, and drink in the wild beauty of the prospect, the calm fragrance of the evening air. The sky is clear, and the setting sun, bathes the woods and rocks which rise yonder, on the opposite shore of the river.

Look around you—and tell us—what is it that meets your gaze. Gaze through the interval, which breaks the compact mass of foliage, on the heights of the opposite shore.

It is a beautiful prospect. At the end of a green field, stands a massive house built of substantial logs, two stories in height and with a line of blue smoke rising from one of its many chimneys, into the sky. Behind the log-house, spreads a prospect of tremulous gold—a field of wheat, extending as far as you can see, until your gaze is lost, in the blue haze of the distant woods. Skirting this golden prospect, a field of emerald green, also extends behind the log-house, and loses its verdure, only in the shadows of the distant woods.

It is a beautiful prospect. A log-house built in the wilderness, not far from the river shore, and rising in the very lap of fruitful fields—fields rich with harvests of emerald and gold. And on the distant hills, herds of cattle were grazing, their shadows lengthened by the setting sun.

Let us cross the river. Let us enter one of those nooks of shadows and flowers, which are sunken amid the foliage of the opposite shores.

There, seated on the sward, behold the owner of the house, a young and hardy man, whose rustic attire cannot divert your attention from the traces of thought and education, visible in every lineament of his face.

Beside him, leaning on his arm, behold a young woman, whose beautiful face is shadowed by raven hair. Very plainly clad, and yet very beautiful, she is seated on the sward, with a child not more than two years old, upon her knee.

This you will confess, is a picture full of interest and meaning.

A young husband, a young wife, sitting in the shadows by the river shore, their faces turned to the western sky, and their hearts

"swelling with that peculiar joy and sorrow, which is produced by the sight of a calm sky, a broad river and lonely woods, all bathed in the glow of departing day.

"Thank God for the free woods!" exclaims the Husband, after a long pause.

The wife does not speak, but she takes her husband by the hand while her eyes fill with tears. As she compares the Present with the Past, so dark and troubled, her heart swells with a sensation of unutterable thankfulness.

And while they are sitting there alone, the sound of footsteps resound among the bushes, and presently two new figures appear upon the scene.

An old but hardy man of almost giant stature, and a young man whose lithe and active figure, does not indicate more than twenty-two years of life. They are dressed in huntsman's gear: with game-bag, powder-horn, and shot-pouch, and each one carries a rifle on his shoulder. As they come into sight, the old man—whose sunburnt face with white whiskers, beams with the good nature of a rough but honest heart—is telling to the young man, some story of adventure in the wild woods, which brings the fire to his large grey eyes.

"It is Peter and Ralph!" cries the young wife in a glad accent.

And in a moment the new-comers are seated beside the husband and wife, while the old man brings forth from the game-bags the fruits of their ramble in the woods.

"We stopped at Marvin Farm in the course o' th' artemnoon," said Peter: "All well. Old Marvin, Hannah, her husband and the little boys."

"We were also at Cattermill's a little while," exclaimed Ralph. "I wonder if Israel Bonus was alive again, whether he'd know John!" Ralph laughed at the idea. "Couldn't help thinking of Bonus Court, as I saw Nancy and her children sitting under a cherry tree, while John was busy with the men in the harvest field. Something of a change—isn't it?"

Lester Farm, Cattermill Farm and Marvin Farm, are the names of three adjoining plantations—if we may use that word, in regard to free land, worked by free labour—and the owners of these farms, were respectively

Charles Lester, William Marvin and John Cattermill. After his marriage with Fanny, Charles had purchased a tract of land in Wisconsin, and divided it into three farms. One he presented to William Marvin, the other to John Cattermill, and the last he reserved for himself.

"That Cattermill ain't the same man," exclaimed Peter. "Don't you remember, Charley, when we first met him—but three years ago—livin' in Cincinnati, a poor, miserable sot, who depended on the labour of his wife for his support? You told him to pack up and come with you. He did that. You giv' him an object to live for. I wish old Bonus could rise from his grave and see John Cattermill as he *is*—not as he *was*. I do."

"And Marvin," said Ralph—"He told me to-day, as we walked in the fields, that he had looked for God in the clouds long enough. 'Now, my child,' says he, 'I find him here, in these free woods.'"

And this change had been accomplished by the agency of Charles Lester. Aroused from the lethargy of mental disease, by his love for the daughter of Alice Bayne, Charles had found developement for his energies, in cultivating this tract of forest land, and in gathering the wandering children of civilized misery and landless toil, to a Home in the wilds of Wisconsin. Marvin, Cattermill and Ralph, were by no means the only monuments of the redemption, accomplished by his kindly heart and active brain.

And then as the evening begins to gather, the conversation turns upon the events of other days.

Peter and the young husband begin to converse in low tones, while Ralph and the young wife look significantly into each other's faces.

Ralph, completely transformed since we last beheld him, presses his sister's hand, while his chest heaves and his eyes brighten with emotion.

Fanny, very pale and trembling, listens to the conversation of Peter and her husband, and silently returns the pressure of her brother's hand.

"You heard that he was living?" whispers Lester, gazing into Peter's face, as it is warmed by the last rays of the setting sun.

"Livin' and preachin'!" answered Peter

"The feller that we left hanging in the woods, has been a preachin', not two months since, in Fildelfy and New York. Thousands of souls—so the papers say—have been soundly converted under his ministry."

"He is alive!" ejaculated Lester: "I am glad of it! Base as he is, I would not have his blood upon my conscience. The worst punishment that you can inflict upon a man like him, is to bid him live!"

"How did he get off the rope? That puzzles me. It's a reg'lar sockdologer."

"Shall I tell the story, Fan?" whispered Ralph to his sister.

"Yes," assented Fanny, blushing and trembling, as she felt conscious that she had kept a secret from her husband.

"Well, Peter," began Ralph, "Do you really want to know how the Preacher escaped?"

Peter looked at him, in much surprise.

"Of course," he answered — "What do you know about it?"

"I cut him down," quietly exclaimed Ralph.

"You cut him down!" was the simultaneous ejaculation of Charles and Peter.

"Forgive me, Charles, it was my fault," interrupted Fanny, laying her hand upon her husband's arm: "You remember *that night*, when I rested at the stone house in the forest —"

"While us folks was a-hangin' the Preacher? Yes. Go on gal," cried Peter.

"Ralph came into my room, after I had gone to bed, and told me the whole story. He told me that not five minutes before, he had left the miserable man, struggling with death, alone in the dark woods. I besought Ralph to hurry back and set him free. After much entreaty, he consented —"

"You had a hard time to persuade me, Fan. But I did hurry back and cut him down, just as he was kicking his last. And I brought him to, and gave him some money, and sent the poor devil on his way. Couldn't help it, Charley: Fan begged so hard, and then it was a shame to send him to the devil, before he had done all the devil's work."

"You are an angel," whispered Charles to his wife, quietly pressing her hand: "You know not how many hours of painful thought you have spared me by this deed. Ralph!

Your hand! It was a good deed, and I like you the better for it."

"Not quite sartin about its goodness," said Peter, as if thinking aloud: "I've know'd many a rattlesnake of much better heart than that same Preacher. Hallo, Charley! I'd almost forgotten it. We stopped at the Post Office on our way home. Here's a letter for you."

Charles took the letter, and glancing at the superscription, beheld the post-mark of Philadelphia. He opened it, and held it toward the light of the setting sun, and thus managed to peruse its contents.

"It is from a good-hearted but eccentric friend of mine," said Charles — "A singular man, indeed, for he is a lawyer in tolerably good practice, and withal an honest man."

PHILADELPHIA, June 16, 1848.

My Dear Friend: — In answer to your enquiries, I hasten to state the following facts which I have gained, after some trouble, and not a little research.

Goodleigh died without heirs. His property (that is what there is left of it) has been absorbed by lawyers, administrators, and police officers. The State took a slice; another slice was swallowed by the United States as some compensation for Goodleigh's ownership of the Slaver, Falcon. In the course of legal investigations, made into this little affair of Goodleigh's connection with the Slave Trade, it appears that the foundation of his wealth was laid in a robbery of the Rev. Lemuel Gardiner, at a Parisian Gambling table. Lemuel you well know had no money of his own. All that he took with him to Paris, was stolen from the orphan children of Arthur Bayne. You may, therefore, come to the same conclusion with myself, in relation to "THE TIN BOX." It belongs to the aforesaid children of Arthur Bayne. Tell Ralph to hold on to it.

Goodleigh's mansion in Drab Row has remained in ruins ever since the fire. You have doubtless seen in the papers some account of the manner in which an iron chest, or rather an Iron Room, was discovered, in the cellar, buried beneath a heap of rubbish. The door was forced open, and two bodies, or wrecks of bodies, were found clasped in a close embrace. They were recognized as the bodies of Caleb Goodleigh, and Lemuel Gardiner. Odd kind of death for two such worthies — don't you think so?

You make enquiries with regard to certain other persons whom you met, during your visit to Philadelphia, in 1843. Let me be at once succinct and graphic.

1. DICKY BUNE — failed in business, cheated his creditors, and may be seen every afternoon in Chestnut street, dressed in the last agony of fashion. Mem: Lives by the "bones."

2. THE SQUASHANOGANT COPPER MINING COM-

FANNY. Died with Goodleigh. Its members gone into other speculations.

3. SLINKUM SCISSLEBY, Esq. Still edits the Daily Copper. Copper still terrible in regard to French Novels, and prolific in obscene advertisements. You're familiar with the natural history of the Ostrich!

4. STEWEL PYDERON, Esq. Alas for the vanity of human glory! Three years ago, Stewel was at the head of a virtuous fraternity, composed of Police Officers, lawyers and thieves. Now! Stewel's glory has departed. Read the Public Trials in the daily papers. Stewel is *barely* outside of the Penitentiary.

Hoping that all this, will meet with your cordial approbation, I am yours, &c. *****

"So Ralph, the tin box is yours at last!" cried Charles: "You entrusted it to me, some three years ago. I will now give it back to you. What do you intend to do with it? It is of course, a separate matter altogether, from the property which you inherit in common with Fanny."

Ralph was silent. He grasped the hand of Charles, and with that silent grasp, spoke the full volume of his gratitude.

By the light of the rising moon, the party ascended to the hill, and returned to the log-house, Fanny leaning on her husband's arm, while Ralph and Peter brought up the rear, with young Arthur in their charge. Once within the walls of their forest home, Ralph drew Charles aside, and whispered "The tin box—I'd like to speak with you about it."

Charles took a light and led him into a small room, which fitted up with some neatness, served as the library. Placing the light on a desk, which supported a small book case, Charles opened a drawer, and Ralph presently beheld the tin box—for the first time in five years.

Charles watched him closely. Ralph's visage, entirely changed from its old-time look

of precocious suffering and stolid defiance, was agitated in every lineament. He regarded the Tin Box for some moments in silence, his lip quivering slightly, and his grey eyes dilating with an intense light.

"Open it Charley," he said at last.

It was opened. The bright surface of golden coin, packed snugly in that narrow space, glittered in the light.

"Take it Ralph. It is yours. You can leave us, and go into business for yourself. Either here, or in some large city."

Ralph took the box and placed it under his arm. Fifteen thousand dollars in gold and bank notes, were now altogether his own. He left the room abruptly and passed from the house, followed by Charles, who did not know what to make of his movements.

Once more in the moonlight, Ralph seized a spade, and hurried down the path which led to the river. When Charles next saw him, he discovered him engaged in digging a cavity, at the foot of a massive oak, whose wide arms overhung the waters.

Charles watched his movements in silence.

The cavity once dug, he dropped the Tin Box into its depths, replaced the earth and smoothed the sod, until it looked even and green as ever.

"There Charley," he exclaimed—"When I want to leave you, and go into business for myself, in some large city, I'll dig up that Tin Box again. Not before."

And as they clasped hands over the grave of the Tin Box it was resolved by Charles and Ralph to leave it rest there, until the year 1849, when (in case Ralph changed his mind, and desired to leave the free forest for the enslaved city,) it should be brought forth to light once more.

A WORD BEFORE WE PART.

You have now perused this Revelation of the Church and Home. It is to the Home, that we turn for consolation and repose, when our feet are weary, and our hearts are suffering. For the Home is the holiest altar which God has reared upon the face of the earth. Better that all the Churches in the world were levelled to the dust, than that the peace of one Home should be destroyed.

But there are two persons who continually threaten the peace and too often destroy the sanctity of Home.

The False Preacher and the False Physician.

Entrusted with the confidence of every member of the Home, these men, every day abuse that confidence, and reward a blind faith, with treachery and outrage.

Certain victims of the treachery of the False Preacher and the False Physician, delineated in the preceding pages, after many trials, survive this treachery and foil these traitors.

But what says the experience of every-day life?

Who shall count the families that have been sun-dered, the children that have been cast, helpless and stigmatized, upon the mercy of the world, the husbands and wives that have been torn from each other, the Homes that have been transformed into Hells, through

the influence of these Criminals of Society — The False Preacher and the False Physician?

In these pages you have seen one member of each class of criminals, delineated with the sincerity and the power, that always attends an earnestly spoken Truth. The previous work lacking the unity and compactness of a mere Novel, has claims to be considered as a History of Real Life.

But there are other False Preachers, there are other False Physicians, whose crimes upon society and the home — crimes striking at the very heart of woman's purity and man's honor — demand a volume much larger than the present, a pen much more powerful than mine.

In another, and a larger work than this, the task will be attempted.

The reader who has traced the characters of Reuben Gatherwood and Edmund Jervis — these Iscariots who betray the Home, as Judas sold his God — will find other members of the same family delineated in the pages of a larger work, more extended in its plan, more exciting in its incidents, more comprehensive in its plot than the "Memoirs," and entitled "THE EMPIRE CITY, OR NEW YORK BY NIGHT AND DAY."

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THE END.

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